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THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

By

GOPINATH DHAWAN

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GOPINATH DHAWAN

Lucknow University

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TO

THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHER

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

This book is an attempt to study Mahatma Gandhi's Political Philosophy including his technique of resisting injustice and abuse of power and of effecting social change. The study is in the context of his philosophy of life. The history of the movements of non-violent resistance led by Gandhiji and others is outside the scope of this book. I have also omitted any detailed account of the historical setting in which Gandhiji developed his theory. This has been necessary because of considerations of space, but this omission has, I trust, the saving grace of letting Gandhiji's Political Philosophy stand out in relief. My desire not to overburden the treatment with historical details has been also due to the conviction that the circumstances of the time of the birth and growth of the theory are not necessarily the test of its validity.

I wrote the book as a thesis for the Ph. D. degree during 1939-41 and am grateful to the authorities of the Lucknow University for permitting me to publish it. In revising it for publication I have made use of Gandhiji's writings and other relevant literature published after 1941. For encouragement and valuable suggestions I am deeply indebted to Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. V. S. Ram, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Lucknow University, and Dr. E. Asirvatham, Head of the Department of Politics and Public Administration, Madras University. I am grateful to Mr. V. K. N. Menon, Reader in Political Science, and Mr. D. P. Mukerji, Reader in Economics and Sociology, of the Lucknow University. Both of them gave me generously of their time, read the MSS. with minute care and suggested many valuable clarifications of thought and expression. I am obliged to Mr. P. G. Narayana, formerly Head of the Department of English in the Lakhaoti College, for his keen interest in the book and for many improvements which he suggested. I also wish to express my gratitude to Syt. K. M. Munshi for very kindly making arrangements for the publication of the book. For help given through books and literature

I am thankful to Dr. M. Ruthnaswamy, Prof. N. K. Chaddha of the Bareilly College and Syt. Radha Krishna Agarwal, M.L.A. There are also many others, friends and colleagues as well as students of mine, to whom I am indebted for help during the preparation and printing of the book.

G. N. DHAWAN

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G. N. D.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	PREFACE	iv
	INTRODUCTION	3
I.	FORERUNNERS	
	India	8
	Islam	21
	China	22
	Greece	23
	Judaism	23
	Christianity	24
	Mediaeval Europe	28
	Quakers	29
	Doukhobors	30
	Thoreau	30
	Ruskin	31
	Tolstoy	32
	Tucker	35
	Contemporary Pacifism	36
II.	METAPHYSICAL BASES	
	Gandhiji's Conception of God and Soul	38
	Bases of His Belief in the Primacy of Spirit	46
	Karma and Rebirth	49
	Freedom of Will	50
	The Problem of Evil	51
III.	ETHICAL PRINCIPLES — THE END AND THE MEANS	
	The Ultimate End	53
	The End and the Means	54
	Truth	57
	Non-violence	60
IV.	ETHICAL PRINCIPLES (*contd.*) — THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SATYAGRAHI LEADER	
	Brahmacharya	76
	Control of the Palate	81
	Fearlessness	82
	Non-stealing and Non-possession	83
	Trusteeship	85
	Bread-labour	90
	Swadeshi	92
	Removal of Untouchability	97
	Equal Respect for Religions	99
	Humility	100

V. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PRACTICABILITY OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES
- Human Nature 103
- Practicability of His Ideal 107
- Suffering — Its Rationale 110

VI. THE DECISION OF THE SATYAGRAHI LEADER
- Public Opinion, Reason, and Faith . . . 117
- Autonomy of the Group 121
- Non-violent Resistance and the Leader . . . 122
- Pre-conditions of the Leader's Decision Being Correct 123

VII. SATYAGRAHA AS THE WAY OF LIFE
- Meaning of Satyagraha 126
- Satyagraha and Passive Resistance 127
- Importance of Satyagraha in Personal Relations . 128
- Satyagraha and Dyadic Conflicts 132
- Issues Involving Social Good 133
- Aim 133
- Persuasion and Efforts for Compromise . . . 135
- Voluntary Suffering — Its Working 139
- Non-co-operation 144
- Fasting 146
- External Help 153
- Satyagrahi and Crime 154
- Self-defence 160
- Possibility of the Non-violent Way of Life . . 161

VIII. SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION — THE LEADER, ORGANIZATION AND PROPAGANDA
- Need of Corporate Satyagraha 165
- Leader 166
- Ashrams 167
- Democracy and the Indian National Congress . 168
- Volunteers and Discipline 179
- Propaganda 184
- The Constructive Programme 190
  - Appendix I — His Last Will and Testament . 209
  - Appendix II — Volunteer's Pledge . . . 211

IX. SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION — THE TECHNIQUE
- Occasion for Corporate Satyagraha 214
- Suspension 217
- The Issue 218
- Open Dealings 222
- Sabotage 224
- Numbers and Money 224
- Non-co-operation 227
- *Hartal* 229
- Social Ostracism 230
- Picketing 231

Civil Disobedience 238
Hijrat 247
X. SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION — NON-POLITICAL CONFLICTS AND CRITICISM
Social Conflicts 249
Religious Conflicts 251
Economic Conflicts 252
Satyagraha and Loosening of Social Bonds . . 257
Is it Un-constitutional ? 258
Satyagraha and Coercion 262
Universal Practicability of Satyagraha . . 266
Satyagraha in India 270
Satyagraha and Violence as Techniques of Revolution 274
IX. THE STRUCTURE OF THE NON-VIOLENT STATE
Gandhiji's "One-step-enough-for-me" Principle . 279
The Stateless Democracy 282
Social Cohesion in the Stateless Society . . 286
The Non-violent State 291
The State — A Means 293
Sovereignty 294
Parliamentary Democracy 294
Elections and Franchise 298
Majority and Minority 300
Functions of the Non-violent State . . . 301
Crimes and Jails 304
Police and Military 310
Justice 310
The Socio-economic Structure and Economic Functions 312
Education 318
Rights and Duties 323
Non-violent Nationalism 325
Foreign Policy of the Non-violent State . . 327
CONCLUSION 337
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY 346
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 352
INDEX 353

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

INTRODUCTION

In 1909 in *Hind Swaraj*, Mahatma Gandhi characterized modern civilization as "a disease" and "a nine days' wonder", for it "takes note neither of morality nor of religion."[1] Moral purity and spiritual stamina, he held, are of incomparably greater survival value to civilizations than physical might and material prosperity. But the warning was mistaken for the mystic effusion of an oriental saint strayed into politics and accordingly went unheeded. Today, however, amidst the carnage and devastation left behind by one world war and the preparations going on for the next, modern civilization seems to be moving to a terrible anti-climax.

The evils associated with modern civilization touch practically every aspect of life. Due to the progress of science and technology the last hundred years have given man greater mechanical mastery over nature than the rest of history. But this achievement, far from making man wiser or happier, has been his greatest misfortune. The bewildering complexity of life resulting from advances in "machine mastery" has made understanding and self-control progressively difficult. Thus material progress has spelt moral ruin.

This moral lag expresses itself in man's inordinate love of wealth and power. The profit-motive which lies at the root of capitalism has blinded him to the ideal of service. Love of power has been one of the most important causes of war and its increasing destructiveness.

Obviously democracy cannot go hand in hand with capitalism and war preparations. The latter require a high degree of total and centralized control and it is, indeed, no wonder that most of the 'civilized' States are today tamely submitting to the tyranny of dictators of one kind or another. Nationalization of conscience and regimentation of intellect are fast becoming ordinary features of life in the modern State.[2] This blind

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1 *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 20-22 and 92.

2 For incidents illustrating how freedom of the Press is becoming illusory in a country like England see the chapter on Propaganda in *Where Stands Democracy?* by Laski and others, and *The Press* (Penguine Series) by W. Steed, specially the Post-script.

worship of wealth and violence cannot go on indefinitely without the human race relapsing into savagery.

But "Civilization," Gandhiji holds, "is not an incurable disease,"[3] though it requires a drastic, revolutionary remedy. This remedy is, according to him, the cultivation of non-violence in all spheres of life.

For centuries war and violence have been tried as a means of achieving peace and prosperity. Today they threaten the very existence of the human race, and the conviction has been growing among the saner sections of mankind that non-violence is the only way of averting the catastrophe.

Gandhiji's philosophy of Satyagraha deserves to be studied because it embodies the lifelong researches of the greatest exponent of non-violence. His philosophy is also important because it is the most original contribution of India to political thought and political practice. Moreover, it forms the philosophical background of the present-day nationalist movement in India where it has moved the masses and won tremendous popularity.

The popularity of the philosophy of Satyagraha is also partly due to Gandhiji's unique personality. He has been compared to the Buddha and the Christ, though he repeatedly disclaimed a prophetic role. ". . .a purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit," said Gokhale in 1909, "has never moved on this earth."[4] To millions of people in India and outside he is the highest embodiment of India's genius and of her eternal will to non-violence. One of the greatest revolutionary leaders of the world, he liberated through non-violent means his people from the domination of the mightiest empire known to history and tried to revolutionize the existing social order. During the last months of his life, single-handed he brought under control outbursts of intense communal violence in several parts of India.

His philosophy is concerned with the perennial problems of man's ultimate goal and the way he should live to advance towards this goal. The philosophy of Satyagraha is essentially practical. It does not resemble those systematic fancies spun out by academic theorists which are often too neat and logical to be true to life. Gandhiji is a *karmayogin*, a practical idealist, and

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[3] *Hind Swaraj*, p. 22.

[4] D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, I, p. 137.

his philosophy has grown out of his own experience, his experiments with truth and non-violence. He teaches only what he has himself practised and what he considers to be practicable for everybody making the necessary effort. Though a man of religion, he makes no false distinction between the religious and the mundane, the spiritual and the temporal. To him religion is meaningless unless it provides a moral basis to all activities of life. He insists that an ideal must prove itself here and now and the highest ethics must also be the highest expediency.

Being practical, the philosophy of Satyagraha concerns itself primarily with the means. It does not ignore the end, but as the end grows out of the means, the progressive use of the non-violent way is everything to the Satyagrahi.

To Gandhiji the end is "the greatest good of all". He is a philosophical anarchist because he believes that this end can be realized only in the classless and Stateless democracy of autonomous village communities based on non-violence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisitiveness and on the largest measure of local and individual initiative instead of centralization. Non-violent nationalism will be co-operative and constructive and will be an integral part of universal humanity instead of being exclusive, competitive and militant; and conflicts will be resolved not on the physical plane of brute force but on the spiritual plane of love. Gandhiji is, however, not a visionary; and as the non-violent society is yet an ideal, remote and uncertain, his philosophy is mainly concerned with the individual who will live and die for the ideal and with the non-violent way that will lead him to it. He does not bother about the details of the distant goal. He has discovered the right path, and one clear step, he believes, should lead to another till in the fulness of time the efforts grow into achievement. To the extent, however, that the method has developed, the broad outlines of the non-violent society of Gandhiji's conception are discernible.

The non-violent technique that he has evolved during more than half a century of his public life seems to be the only hope and the most sensible strategy of the poor, the 'backward' and the downtrodden. For the first time in the history of the world he has shown how even unarmed nations can make war—of course, non-violent war—to win freedom. He has thus given to

the world what has been a desideratum for long, "a moral equivalent of war".[5]

In Gandhiji's philosophy stress is always laid on the individual as the starting point of social regeneration. To him the problem of the group is essentially the problem of the individual. The reason for this emphasis is that man is above all the soul, and the progress of society depends on the soul-force of the average individual. Unlike Marxists and Fascists who work from the outside and work to the inner, Gandhiji starts from the soul within and works his way out to the environment. But though in his plan of social reconstruction he attaches great importance to the individual with whom lies the first step, he also makes the institutional approach. Thus Satyagraha works from the individual to the social order and also from the social order back to the individual.

But Gandhiji does not take a partial view of man. He does not neglect the demands of man's lower nature. His well-known letter to Tagore, entitled "The Great Sentinel",[6] is an irrefutable vindication of the minimum legitimate physical needs of man. But man is not a mere physical being conditioned by stimuli. The real being in man, the central truth in him, is the spirit. The spirit is one in all, and to realize this great truth "one has to lose oneself in the continuous and continuing service of all life."[7] Thus the individual must live for social service and live increasingly by self-direction rather than by mere habit.

Another feature of his philosophy—and this is a source of diffidence to the student—is that it continued to grow as long as he was alive and so it may not be possible to evaluate it properly for a long time to come. In his own words, "Non-violence in politics is a new weapon in the process of evolution."[8] "I am myself daily growing in the knowledge of Satyagraha. I have no text-book to consult in time of need,. . .Satyagraha as conceived by me is a science in the making."[9] "I have no set theory to go by. I have not worked out the science of Satyagraha in its

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5 *The Nation's Voice*, p. 234.

6 *Speeches*, pp. 607-13.

7 *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* edited by S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, Gandhiji's article.

8 *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308.

9 *H.*, Sept. 24, 1938, p. 266.

entirety."[10] He turned down requests to write a treatise on the science of *ahimsa*, as his domain was action and not academic writings. He wrote in 1946, "Any such (treatise) during my lifetime would necessarily be incomplete. If at all it could only be written after my death. And even so let me give the warning that it would ever fail to give a complete exposition of *ahimsa*. No man has ever been able to describe God fully. The same holds true of *ahimsa*."[11]

Gandhiji insisted that loyalty to truth rules out fixed modes of thought and action, rigidity of attitude and claims to finality. Truth as known to man is relative. Its seeker must be willing to learn from facts and to evolve and mould his principles according to changing circumstances and situations.

The message of Satyagraha abides. But we cannot, on that account, postpone the systematic study of this sovereign remedy for the ills that afflict the modern world. The impossibility of full treatment is no peculiarity of the science of Satyagraha. It is the characteristic of every science. Besides, Gandhiji's long public life devoted to experiments with truth and non-violence has already become a part of history and he himself provides ample material for a study of their results.

Even during his lifetime when his philosophy was living and evolving its prominent contours could be discerned. The evolution was more in the nature of filling in of details or making slight changes in the superstructure rather than any alterations in its foundations. Thus referring to *Hind Swaraj*, he says, "But after a stormy thirty years through which I have since passed I have seen nothing to make me alter the views expounded in it."[12]

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[10] *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 136.
[11] *H.*, March 3, 1946, pp. 28-29.
[12] *Aryan Path*, Sept. 1938.

CHAPTER I

FORERUNNERS

Non-violence has been preached and practised in practically every country and by people in every stage of culture. Many leaders of thought and founders of great religions of the world have taught that violence cannot be overcome by violence and evil cannot be overcome by evil.

In no other country of the world has the tradition of non-violence been so deep-rooted and continuous as in India. Non-violence is rightly considered to be India's greatest contribution to world-thought. All the important Indian religions preach non-violence as the greatest duty. Indians have believed from early times in the doctrine of spiritual immanence expressed in the well-known aphorisms *Soham* (I am He) and *Tat tvamasi* (Thou art That). The conviction that all life is one has led to the extension of non-violence even to subhuman creation.

Varnashramadharma,[1] the social organization of the Hindus, the earliest reference to which occurs in the famous *Purusha Sukta* of the *Rig Veda*, aimed at training people in this supreme virtue. Its goal was to make all men, even the *shudras*, *brahmanas*. A *brahmana* filled with peaceful joy, born of communion with the Universal Soul, represented the highest of which human nature is capable and was expected to refrain spontaneously from resisting evil by force. The *kshatriya* was no doubt permitted, as a concession to his weakness, to employ force in order to resist aggression. But it was recognized that the law of love practised by the *brahmana* is higher than the law of brute force employed by the *kshatriya*. *Varnashramadharma* also laid down that the *kshatriya* should fight in a spirit of brotherliness, without hate and out of a sense of duty and not in a vindictive mood. The *kshatriya* would, if he acted in this spirit of humanity, rise spiritually and rely less and less on brute force until he became a *brahmana* incapable of injuring any living being. Thus "Though violent resistance is allowed,

[1] For the relation between non-violence and *varnashramadharma* see S. Radhakrishnan, *Heart of Hindustan*, pp. 22-24 and 44-45 and *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 117 f.

the end is to transcend it." At any rate *Varnashramadharma* restricted fighting to only a small section of the entire population, i.e., the *kshatriyas*.

Hindu ethics since the time of the *Upanishads* has always laid stress on the virtue of *ahimsa* or non-injury to all living beings, human or otherwise. According to Rhys Davids *ahimsa* is expressly mentioned for the first time in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (III, 17) "where five ethical qualities, one being *ahimsa*, are said to be equivalent to a part of sacrifice of which the whole life of man is made an epitome."[2]

Patanjali, whose *Yogasutra* Gandhiji studied in 1903 at Johannesburg, included *ahimsa* in his *pancha yamas*, i.e., the five cardinal disciplines which have since had the pride of place in the Hindu technique of spiritual advancement. As we will discuss later (chapters III and IV), Gandhiji has elaborated these *yamas* and made them an integral part of the discipline of the Satyagrahi. Patanjali lays down that *ahimsa* is not merely a negative doctrine in the sense of avoidance of violence; it also implies goodwill towards all creatures.[3]

The tradition of *ahimsa* was further developed in the epics of India. The *Ramayana*[4] and the *Mahabharata*, the guides of millions in India, are apparently stories of wars. But the object of these poets, Valmiki and Vyasa, is not the mere historical narration of wars. Gandhiji is of the opinion that the epics, though probably some of the figures they deal with are historical, are allegories which describe the eternal duel that goes on within man between the forces of light and darkness.[5] In the *Ramayana* the moral grandeur of the acts of peace eclipses the war. The author of the *Mahabharata* has demonstrated the

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[2] T. W. Rhys Davids in the article on "Ahimsa" in *The Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion*. The relevant text of the *Chhandogya* is

अथ यत्तपो दानमार्जवमहिंसा सत्यवचनमिति ता अस्य दक्षिणाः ।

[3] S. K. Maitra, *Ethics of the Hindus*, pp. 220-21.

Patanjali's famous aphorism on *ahimsa* is: अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः । (As soon as *ahimsa* is perfected all enmity around ceases.)

[4] Gandhiji's first acquaintance with the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas dates back to his childhood when he was 13 years of age. He considers it to be "the greatest book in all devotional literature". *Autobiography*, I, p. 83.

[5] References to Gandhiji's views on *ahimsa* in the epics are: *H.*, Oct. 30, 1936, p. 266; Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236; Nov. 11, 1939, p. 330; August 18, 1940, p. 250; *Y. I.*, II, p. 937; and *The Gita According to Gandhi*.

futility of war and violence. He has given an empty glory to the victors, for seven only were left alive out of the millions that engaged in the titanic conflict. "He has made the victors shed tears of sorrow and repentance, and has left them nothing but a legacy of miseries." He has made the blind king Dhritarashtra and the queen Gandhari listen to the agonizing details of the terrible carnage of their sons and nephews as it goes on from day to day. He also shows that in a violent war the contending parties are certain to stoop to meanness and trickery. Even the great Yudhishthira had to resort to untruth to save the battle.

The *Mahabharata* also directly advocates *ahimsa*. Indeed, by the time of the *Mahabharata ahimsa* had come to be regarded as the highest duty. Vyasa extols *satya*, *ahimsa* and other non-violent values at several places in the *Mahabharata*. The wounded Bhishma thus exalted *ahimsa* in his discourse to Yudhishthira, "*Ahimsa* is the highest religion. It is again the highest penance. It is also the highest truth from which all duty proceeds."[6] In the *Shantiparva* Kapila considers kindliness, forgiveness, peacefulness, *ahimsa*, truth, straightforwardness, absence of pride, modesty, forbearance and tolerance as the ways to attain *Brahman*.[7] In the *Vanaparva* we read "The hard and the soft yield alike to the soft; in fact there is nothing impossible for the soft, hence the soft is more powerful than the hard."[8]

In regard to the *Gita* there has been a controversy as to whether it advocates *ahimsa* or *himsa*. The *Gita* is the

---

6 अहिंसा परमो धर्मः अहिंसा परमं तपः ।
अहिंसा परमं सत्यम्, ततो धर्मः प्रवर्तते ।।
Anushasanaparva (edited by P. P. S. Sastri), CIV, 25. For emphasis on *ahimsa* see also *Anushasanaparva*, CV, 23-45. Similarly for Truth see *Shantiparva* (P. P. S. Sastri), CLXXXVIII, 61-74.

7 आनृशंस्यं क्षमा शान्तिर् अहिंसा सत्यमार्जवम् ।
अद्रोहो नातिमानश्च ह्रीस्तितिक्षा शमस्तथा ।
पन्थानो ब्रह्मणस्त्वेते, एतैः प्राप्नोति यत् परम् ।।
Shantiparva (P. P. S. Sastri), CCLV, 39-40.

8 मृदुना दारुणं हन्ति मृदुना हन्त्यदारुणम् ।
नासाध्यम् मृदुना किञ्चित् तस्मात्तीक्ष्णतरं मृदुः ।।
Vanaparva (P. P. S. Sastri), XXIV, 30.

quintessence of the *Upanishads* and is considered by many to be the brightest gem in Indian philosophical literature.

Of the books that have moulded Gandhiji the *Gita* easily comes the first. Gandhiji's first acquaintance with it was in England in 1888-1889 when he studied, along with two English friends, Sir Edwin Arnold's translation. Later on he studied most of its important commentaries. For long he read the *Gita* daily and endeavoured to live up to its teaching for an unbroken period of sixty years. He regarded it as "the spiritual reference book".[9] In his well-known address to Christian missionaries in Calcutta on July 28, 1925, he acknowledged his attachment to the *Gita* thus:

"...Though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity....Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find a solace in the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Upanishads* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount...when doubt haunts me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the *Bhagavadgita*, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the *Bhagavadgita*."[10]

The *Gita*,[11] like the *Mahabharata* of which it is the most valued part, is not a treatise on non-violence, which was "an accepted and primary duty even before the *Gita* age". Nor was it written to condemn war which was not considered inconsistent with *ahimsa* then.[12] Similarly it does not advocate violence either. The theme of the *Gita* is self-realization and its means. The second and eighteenth chapters give us the central teaching of the *Gita* regarding the way to self-realization—the ideal of *anasaktiyoga* or *nishkamakarma* (action without desire for the result). "But renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference

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9 *The Gita According to Gandhi*, pp. 122-23.

10 *Y. I.*, II, pp. 1078-79.

11 References to Gandhiji's views on *ahimsa* in the *Gita* are: *The Gita According to Gandhi*; *Y. I.*, II, pp. 907, 927-40; *H.*, Jan. 21, 1939, p. 430; and Oct. 3, 1936, p. 257.

12 *The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 129; *Diary* I, p. 126.

to the result. In regard to every action one must know the result that is expected to follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He, who being thus equipped, is without desire for the result, and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfilment of the task before him, is said to have renounced the fruits of his action." According to Gandhiji this central teaching of the *Gita* is against any line of demarcation being drawn between salvation and worldly pursuits and implies that "religion must rule our worldly pursuits" and "that what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion."[13] The last nineteen verses of the second chapter, which, says Gandhiji, "contain for me all knowledge" and "are the key to the interpretation of the *Gita*",[14] explain how the balanced state of mind can be achieved by killing all passions and by renouncing desires rather than objects. The *sthitaprajna*, the ideal man of the *Gita*, is humble and merciful, free from joy and sorrow, fear and hatred and unconcerned with good or bad results. He is essentially a non-violent man, for violence has for its basis the desire to enjoy the results of one's action. As Gandhiji once said to Dr Kagawa, "It is not possible to kill your brother after having killed all your passions."[15] On another occasion he wrote, "The result of this selfless detachment must be uttermost truth and non-violence."[16] Conversely, this supreme state of non-attachment cannot be fully achieved without the practice of non-violence.

No doubt Arjuna who had refused to fight was convinced of his mistake after the discourse and agreed to join battle. But Arjuna was no conscientious objector. His pacifism was born of a temporary infatuation, a disinclination to kill his own kith and kin due to false pity. He was not worried over the problem of killing as such. His hesitation was due to the persons whom he was intended to kill. "The religious answer to this attachment would be that there is no kinsman and no no-kinsman. . . . If therefore it is lawful to wage war at all, it makes no difference whether it is kinsmen who are concerned or strangers." Thus Arjuna's infatuation was cowardice and killing and being killed, Krishna taught, is far better than cowardice.

[13] *The Gita According to Gandhi*, pp. 128-29.
[14] *Y. I.*, II, p. 935.
[15] *H.*, Jan. 14, 1939, p. 430.
[16] Barr, p. 14.

It may be argued that Krishna, in spite of his detachment, was not neutral in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. He was on the side of right and truth. Though he refrained from fighting, he was an expert in war. His advice and expert knowledge were availed of by the Pandavas, and it is wrong to suppose that his support was only moral. But the Krishna of the *Gita* is a liberated soul, who has attained perfect mental equilibrium and risen above violence and non-violence. Only such a person can kill for the good of all without the least attachment and is non-violent even while killing.[17] For the ordinary mortal treading this solid earth the practice of *ahimsa* seems essential for attaining the state of non-attachment.

In spite of the emphasis on *ahimsa* in the religious and philosophical literatures, *ahimsa* was regarded as the virtue of sages and seekers and animal sacrifices continued to be practised in India. Jainism and Buddhism were revolts against the elaborate ritual, caste rigidity and sacrificial violence of the Brahmanical faith.

Ahimsa is the leading tenet of the Jaina philosophy. The Jainas believe that the entire world is literally packed with an infinite number of embodied souls, their bodies being either gross and visible or subtle and invisible. All the elements are animated with souls. The embodiment of the spirit in the material body is the cause of misery. So life means pain even to souls with invisible bodies. To become a *muktatma*, a soul liberated from the bonds of the body, the individual must complete the process of *nirjara*, i.e., get rid of *karmas*. For this there are three means (*triratnas*), right knowledge (*samyak jnana*), right insight (*samyak darshana*) and right conduct (*samyak charitrya*). Right conduct consists in five vows (*vratas*) of which non-killing (*ahimsa*) is the first, the other four being truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. Monks have to observe them rigidly and laymen so far as they can.

The Jainas lay excessive emphasis on *ahimsa*. To give some instances of their extreme scrupulousness, the Jaina ascetics do not drive away vermin from their clothes or bodies, carry a filter and a broom to save minute insects in the water they drink or on the ground where they sit. The world being filled

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[17] *The Gita*, XVIII, 17.

with embodied souls experiencing pain, all activities involve violence. So Jainism insists that the follower of *ahimsa* should engage in the fewest possible activities. Jainism, thus, encourages asceticism for its own sake. With Jainas *ahimsa* became synonymous with refusal to take the life of even the smallest insect. This is, indeed, the extreme application of the negative aspect of a vital principle, and as such it has become, in the words of Mr Andrews, "a burden to humanity almost impossible to bear".[18] According to Gandhiji, this extreme application is based on an assumption which is not always true, i.e., the agony of death is more severe than that of life. This assumption is rooted in ignorance and has led to the distortion of *ahimsa* on account of undue emphasis being placed on the sacredness of subhuman life in preference to human life.[19] All the same Jainism has been an important factor in sustaining and deepening the tradition of non-violence in India.

In no other province of India is the hold of Jainism on the life of the people greater than in Gujarat where Gandhiji was born and brought up. In his childhood, his father, though a Vaishnava, frequently associated with Jaina monks.[20] In spite of this early Jaina influence, Gandhiji, unlike the Jainas, lays due emphasis on the positive aspect of *ahimsa*.

Buddhism avoids the extreme view of *ahimsa* taken by Jainism.[21] Buddha's teaching, it has been said, begins with purity and ends with love, and is distinguished by the emphasis on the ethical rather than on the metaphysical element. His ethics is the practical application of the ethics of the *Upanishads*.

The Buddha, although born a man, is as Tathagata (True-Come) inconnumerable, "beyond all ways of telling". He is the Dhamma, the Eternal Law, the Truth.

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18 C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 132.

19 *Diary*, I, p. 148; *H.*, June 9, 1946, p. 172.

20 *Autobiography*, I, pp. 56, 57 and 84.

21 It is interesting to note that though the Buddha forbids the monks knowingly to make use of meat killed for them, yet he allows them fish and meat, "if they have not been seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk." The Buddha's last meal is said to have included a dish of pork. Edward Conze and others (ed.) *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, pp. 22-23. Anand K. Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 79.

Regarding the place of ethics in the Buddha's teaching it may be pointed out that the objective of the Bodhisattva in his search for Enlightenment was essentially ethical, that is, to put an end to suffering.[22] The Bodhisattva's transcendent virtues were his effective body-guard against the onslaught and temptation of Mara (Death). He withstood the last and the subtlest temptation of Mara which was to remain a solitary Buddha enjoying by himself the fruit of Enlightenment. Instead the Buddha set out to preach, during his ministry of forty-five years, the Way to attain the ultimate purpose of life. The Buddha is, of course, beyond ethics, uncontaminated by vice as well as virtue, both of which imply the notion of oneself and others, even as he is beyond all categories. So would be any man who sheds ignorance, works out his liberation from the law of causal origination and attains immortality. Until then there are things *he* ought and things *he* ought not to do.[23]

The Buddha enjoins good moral habits as being essential for the achievement of the ultimate goal of life, but they are not enough. Wrong moral habits are fraught with peril to the individual. Nirvana, however, is beyond good and evil both of which bind the individual.[24] To attain purity the individual must by an effort of will eradicate the notion of 'I' and 'mine', rise above name and aspect, see clearly the causal origination of all things and "plunge" into the "Immortal".[25]

The four cardinal truths of Buddhism are suffering or ill, its cause, its suppression and the Way or the Walk by which

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[22] Explaining a Bodhisattva's perfection of morality the Buddha says, "He himself lives under the obligation of the ten ways of wholesome acting, and also others he instigates thereto."

"A Bodhisattva resolves: I take upon myself the burden of all suffering. ...At all costs I must bear the burdens of all beings. I have made a vow to save all beings....The world of living beings I must rescue from the terrors of birth, of old age, of sickness, of death and rebirth...." Edward Conze and others, cited above, pp. 135, 131-32 (*Panchvimsatisahasrika*, 194-95, *Sikshasamuccaya*, 280-81).

[23] Anand K. Coomaraswamy and I. B. Horner, *The Living Thoughts of Gautama, the Buddha*, p. 15.

[24] "Purity cannot be attained by virtue—nor without it (*Suttanipata*, 839); purity is not only from vice but also virtue." *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[25] "The means that are actually resorted to are not in themselves means to Nirvana, but means to the removal of all that obscures the vision of Nirvana...." *Ibid.*, p. 17.

the cause can be suppressed. The problem of suffering with which the Buddha is primarily concerned is "the problem. . .of the corruptibility of all things born, composite and mutable, their liability to suffering, disease, inveteration and death."[26] This liability has a cause. Ignorance, the primary evil, is the ultimate origin of all suffering and bondage.[27] The ariyan eightfold Way, the moral code of self-discipline has been called by Rhys Davids "the very essence of Buddhism".[28] The Way is for those whose wants are few and not for those whose wants are many; for "pleasures of senses have been likened by the Lord to a bare bone, of great suffering, of great tribulation, wherein is further peril."[29] In fact, it is a gospel of self-mastery meant for the *bhikkhus* who forsake "the dark state of life in the world". The Way rejects the two extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence and is essentially non-violent. *Ahimsa* again is the first among the ten precepts for the order (*sikhapadani*) as well as among the five rules of conduct for laymen (*panchasilani*) which correspond to the first five of the precepts.

The Buddha teaches *ahimsa* both as love and avoidance of injury to self and others. He enjoins the renunciation of onslaught on creatures, taking what is not given, lying, malicious speech, greed, angry blame, wrathful rage, and self-conceit.[30] Even the householder is to refrain from war and violence towards all living creatures. War, strife and violence settle no issues. They breed fear and lead to similar counter-measures. The Buddha averted a war between Kalyas and Sakyas. According to Buddha: "Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy."[31]

26 Coomaraswamy and Horner, cited above, p. 13, "Precisely this do I teach, now as formerly: ill and the stopping of ill." Conze and others, cited above, p. 11 (*Majjhima-Nikaya*, I, 140).

27 "Whatever is not knowing concerning ill, its arising, its stopping, the course leading to its stopping—this, monks, is called ignorance." Coomaraswamy and Horner, cited above, p. 146. (*Samyutta-Nikaya*, II, 4). "When ignorance has been got rid of and knowledge has arisen, one does not grasp after sense-pleasures, speculative views, rites and customs, the theory of self." Conze and others, cited above, p. 76 (*Majjhima-Nikaya*, I, 67).

28 The Way consists of right view, right concept, right doing, right mode of living, right exertion, right mindfulness and right contemplation.

29 Coomaraswamy and Horner, cited above, p. 122.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

31 Anand Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 178 n.

"The slayer gets a slayer in his turn;
The conqueror gets one who conquers him;
Th' abuser wins abuse, the annoyer fret
Thus by the evolution of the deed
A man who spoils is spoiled in his turn."[32]

Regarding any deed of body, speech and thought his teaching is: "If you know that it does conduce to the harm of self or to the harm of others or to the harm of both and that it is wrong, then, Rahula, a deed such as this should not, as far as you are able, be done by you."[33]

Regarding harsh speech there is a passage of the *Ruru-deer Jataka* which, writes Coomaraswamy, is perhaps unique in all literature in its extreme tenderness and courtesy:

"For who—the Bodhisattva asks—would willingly use harsh speech to those who have done a sinful deed, strewing salt, as it were, upon the wound of their fault?"[33]

Positively *ahimsa* should find expression in love, pity, tenderness and impartiality (*metta, karuna, mudita, upekha*). The love that the Buddha teaches is the deliberately radiated well-wishing love towards all living things whatever. He wanted monks to suffuse with a heart of love all creatures, all breathers, all beings and everything. This love is unsullied by motives of sense desire, passion or hope of a return. According to the Buddha even when one's body is dismembered, one should radiate goodwill towards all beings, remain patient for the sake of deliverance even of those that dismember it and do them no injury even in thought.

Impartiality is a subjective state of patience or detachment in regard to whatever pleasant and unpleasant things befall an individual. *Mudita* or sympathy has for its basis charity, kind speech, doing a good turn and treating all alike.[34] *Karuna* or compassion is the fruit of insight which enables an individual to see all beings as on the way to their slaughter.[35]

The *Metta Sutta* brings out clearly the Buddha's ideal of *ahimsa*:

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[32] Coomaraswamy and Horner, cited above, pp. 114 and 77.

[33] Coomaraswamy, cited above, p. 111.

[34] Coomaraswamy and Horner, cited above, pp. 32, 116 and 136; Conze and others, cited above, pp. 180 and 136.

[35] Conze and others, cited above, p. 127.

"As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her son, her only son, so let there be goodwill without measure among all beings. Let goodwill without measure prevail in the world, above, below, around, unstinted, unmixed with any feeling of differing or opposing interests. If a man remain steadfastly in this state of mind all the while he is awake, whether he be standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, there is come to pass the saying, 'Even in this world holiness has been found.' "[36]

The Buddha's well-known teaching is:

"By no wrath should he conquer wrath;
unworth by worth should he overcome;
he should o'ercome the stingy by a gift,
by truth him who doth falsely speak."[37]

The way of the Buddha is primarily for his monastic order unattached to social activities and unbound by social ties. It is not directly concerned with the order of the world. In the words of Coomaraswamy, "It will be most inappropriate to give him the title of democrat or social reformer. It was not his purpose to establish order in the world or redress social injustice." So Buddhism never formulated the ideal of a social order. Even when dealing with matters referred to him for decision and expounding lay morality the Buddha confined himself mostly to mutual duties of children and parents, man and wife, master and servant, friends and the duty of ministering to the *bhikkhus* and *brahmanas*. Because good government cannot lead to *Nibbana* (Dying Out) which is the sole concern of his Gospel, Buddhism is not concerned with government at all and has no faith in it. To Buddhism the road of political wisdom is 'an unclean path of falseness'.[38] The Buddha's teaching of non-violence therefore, is mostly confined to personal relations. All the same his doctrine of avoiding all violence, returning love for hatred and compassion for all life is no doubt one of the greatest steps forward taken by mankind.

Asoka occupies a unique place in the history of non-violence. To him alone belongs the distinction of making efforts to administer one of the biggest empires known to history on the principles of *ahimsa*. Intensely disgusted with the carnage

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36 Ananda Coomaraswamy, cited above, p. 102.
37 Coomaraswamy and Horner, cited above, p. 113.
38 Coomaraswamy, cited above, pp. 117, 119 and 176.

and cruelties of the Kalinga war, he gave up animal food, the royal hunt and the tours of pleasure and placed before the world the ideal of universal peace and brotherhood of all living creatures. In the words of Mr. Wells, "He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory."[39]

To his unsubdued borderers his message was, "The king desires that his unsubdued borderers, the peoples on his frontiers, should not be afraid of him but should trust him, and would receive from him not sorrow but happiness." (Kalinga Rock Edict II). He declared, "The chiefest conquest is the conquest of Right and not of might." (R. E. XIII). *Dharmavijaya*, won by love (*priti*) and expressed in social service and moral propaganda, was the positive aspect of his non-violent foreign policy which was based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity of all States, big and small.

Inside the empire his government vigorously devoted itself to social service among the masses. It also made arrangements for the moral instruction of his people in those cardinal principles of morality which are acceptable to every creed. Asoka has on this account been called humanity's first teacher of Universal Religion.[40] He had his principles of policy and morality inscribed on rocks and pillars and *ahimsa* forms the subject of the first, second and fourth of his Rock Edicts.

But Asoka did retain the army and his moral principles were enforced among the people by the usual methods of punishment and coercion. This gives to his rule the character of paternal despotism.[41]

Both Buddhism and Jainism laid stress on *ahimsa* being organically related to truth, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. But later on when monasticism degenerated these virtues were disregarded and the tradition of *ahimsa* weakened.

Later religious sects and teachers in India, especially the

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[39] H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (1932), p. 400.

[40] R. K. Mukerjee, "The Greatness of Asoka's Conquest" in *Prabuddha Bharat*, Dec. 1939, p. 585. See also his *Asoka*, p. 76. The *Dhamma* proclaimed by Asoka, though distinctly Buddhist, dwells exclusively on ethics and omits all reference to the analytic aspect of the Buddha's teaching. Thus, as Coomaraswamy points out, *Nibbana* is not even mentioned. Coomaraswamy, cited above, p. 179.

[41] Coomaraswamy, cited above, p. 181.

devotional saints who preached the *bhakti-marga*, continued to extol compassion, truth, charity, humility and other gentle virtues. So the tradition of *ahimsa* persisted down the centuries.[42] No distinctive contribution was, however, made to the evolution of the ideal after Asoka. Moreover, in the hands of the teachers of the cult of devotion, who drew a distinction between the life of the world and self-realization, non-violence came to be looked upon as inapplicable to secular matters.

All through this long period the people of India have been familiar with certain non-violent methods of resisting evil. *Dharna* (sitting down at the door of the oppressor with the resolve to die unless the wrong is redressed), *prayopaveshana* (fasting unto death), *ajnabhanga* (civil disobedience), *desha-tyaga* (giving up the country) are instances. Before Gandhiji's entry into Indian politics these non-violent methods had been occasionally resorted to by individuals and, in rare instances, even by small groups. But these methods of resistance were usually forms of passive resistance as distinguished from satyagraha.[43] Bishop Heber describes non-co-operation by three lakhs of the people of Banaras against the British Government long before Gandhiji's time.[44] Similarly in 1830 the entire population of Mysore practised non-co-operation against the tyranny of the ruler.[45] Gandhiji tells us in his autobiography how his father, the Dewan of Rajkot, practised passive resistance successfully. An Assistant Political Agent spoke insultingly of the Thakore of Rajkot. His father protested. The Agent was angry, asked him to apologize and on refusal had him arrested and detained for some hours. The town meanwhile grew excited. In the end the Agent ordered him to be released.[46]

Non-violence is, however, not the peculiarity of any one

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42 It may be incidentally mentioned that a hymn (entitled "*Vaishnava-jana to tene kahiye*", i.e., he should be called the true Vaishnava) of one of the teachers of this school, the poet-saint Narsinha Mehta (15th century), was a special favourite of Gandhiji.

43 For the difference between passive resistance and satyagraha see Ch. VII *infra*.

44 The Rev. J. J. Doke refers to this instance in his *M. K. Gandhi, An Indian Patriot* (Natesan), p. 87.

45 Bart de Ligt refers to this instance in Ch. VII of his *Conquest of Violence*.

46 *Autobiography*, I, p. 17; J. J. Doke, cited above, p. 16.

race, creed or country. Being the expression of love, it is a universal virtue. Before dealing with the contribution of other countries and peoples we may briefly study the place of non-violence in Islam.

Unfortunately Islam has become associated in the common mind with violence and coercion. But Gandhiji regards Islam as a religion of peace in the same sense in which Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. The followers of Islam have occasionally been too free with the sword, but that is due not to the teaching of the Quran but to the environment in which Islam was born. According to Gandhiji the chief contribution of Islam has been the brotherhood of man.[47]

But the Prophet's was essentially a message of kindness and consideration, peace and love, love not only for human beings but also for the sub-human creation. The Quran prefers non-violence to violence. The very word *Islam* means 'peace', 'safety', 'salvation'. The common Muslim salutation '*As-salamalaikum*' means 'peace be on you'.

In his personal life the Prophet was extremely gentle, humane and "more modest than a virgin behind her curtain". To his inferiors he was most indulgent, and scarcely ever rebuked his servant Anas. He loved children and never cursed.[48]

He enjoined upon his followers to treat well women and slaves, two of the suppressed classes in Arabia at that time. He also insisted on the rights of animals and considered wanton destruction of life reprehensible. He said, "There is no beast on earth nor bird which flieth with its wings, but same is a people like unto you (mankind). Unto the Lord shall they return."[49] The Prophet forbade the use of living birds as targets for marksmen and remonstrated with those who ill-treated animals.

No doubt the Quran permits defensive war and war against the wrongdoer.[50] The Prophet himself fought defensive wars and forgave his defeated enemies. Besides, there are passages in the Quran which show that he considered non-violence a

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[47] *Y. I.*, III, pp. 43-44; Barr, p. 119; and *Conversations*, pp. 30-31.

[48] P. D. L. Johnstone, *Muhammad and His Power*, p. 149.

[49] The Quran, VI, 38.

[50] *Ibid.*, XXII, 39 and II, 190-93.

better method of conquering evil than violence. He said, "Turn aside evil with that which is better."[51]

He did not permit forcible conversion. He said, "Let there be no compulsion in religion; the right way is in itself distinct from the wrong."[52] "But if thy Lord had pleased, verily all who are in the world would have believed together. Wilt thou then compel men to become believers? No soul can believe but by the permission of God."[53] The only method he advocated was preaching.[54] The Prophet also taught the principle of religious toleration[55] and the ideal of the brotherhood of all humanity irrespective of differences of race, sect, colour, etc.

China, too, has had a long tradition of non-violence. For thousands of years the strike has been a well-known weapon, and disarmament proposals can be traced as far back as B.C. 546.[56] The three Chinese religions, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are pacific.

Confucious (about 551-478 B.C.) avoids the mistake, made by many other thinkers, of admiring military heroism and martyrdom. To him an integrated, harmonious life is preferable to mere courageous death. The golden rule of Confucious, the basis of all relations, was the principle of reciprocity, i.e., men should not do to others as they do not want done to themselves.

Confucious was, however, not opposed to group violence, for he considered a military equipment as the third requisite of government.[57] He also repudiated Lao Tse's principle of returning good for evil and proposed to repay injury with justice.[58] Thus though he forbade revenge in personal relations, he did not preach the principle of overcoming evil by love.

Lao Tse, a contemporary of Confucious, who has been called "anarchist, evolutionist, pacifist and moral philosopher", and whose teachings later developed into modern Taoism, marks an advance on Confucious. He laid emphasis on the positive aspect of non-violence in personal reaction to injuries, i.e., on

51 The Quran, XXIII, 98; see also V, 127; XVII, 127; and XXIII, 196.
52 *Ibid.*, II, 256.
53 *Ibid.*, X, 99, 100.
54 *Ibid.*, III, 19.
55 *Ibid.*, VI, 108; XVI, 38; XXV, 22; XIII, 8; XXII, 41 etc.
56 A. C. F. Beales, *The History of Peace*, p. 16.
57 C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 14.
58 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

conquering evil by love. *Tao* means the Way and, according to Lao Tse, the highest duty of man consists in learning and imitating the *Tao*, the eternal cosmic principle, the principle of non-assertion, the opposite of egotism and violence. Non-assertion means self-effacement and returning good for evil. For the first time in China Lao Tse clearly enunciated the doctrine of non-resistance, but his teaching was confined to personal relations, and he did not work out the social application of the doctrine.

In the recent past China several times used the economic boycott against Britain and Japan. Though by no means a pacifist country today, she has been free from the aggressive type of nationalism.

In ancient Greece Socrates was a satyagrahi who preferred the poison-bowl to giving up his pursuit of truth and resisting by non-violent means the superstitious beliefs of his people.

His disciple, Plato, asserted that "the creation of the world (i.e., the Cosmos) is the victory of persuasion over force". Violence, according to Plato, makes for Chaos; the "divine persuasion" makes for Cosmos.[59] In his *Republic* he puts the warrior class second to philosophers.

Among the stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius clearly formulated the doctrine of non-resistance to evil in personal affairs. The doctrine was, however, not applied to war or punishment of crime.[60]

Early Rome (5th century B.C.) also provides us with a memorable example of non-violent non-co-operation. The exploited plebeians forced the patricians, by an organized non-violent exodus, to grant them political and economic rights.[61]

As for Judaism, the Old Testament abounds in passages that are looked upon as the heirloom of the non-violent movement. Thus the Pentateuch says, "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again."[62]

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59 Reference by Mr. C. F. Andrews in his article on "The Divine Persuasion" in *Harijan*, August 13, 1938, and also in his address on *Ahimsa* published in *Review of Philosophy and Religion*, April, 1939.

60 C. M. Case, cited above, pp. 34-41.

61 B. de Ligt, cited above, pp. 106-07.

62 *Exodus*, XXIII, 4.

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."[63]

"Rejoice not when thine enemy faileth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth."[64]

"Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins."[65]

The later scriptures of Judaism, for example, the Mishna, its commentary and the Talmud, kept up this tradition.

Professor W. E. Hocking writing about the early Jewish community observes, "In its case, a tenacious religious faith made possible a direction of public affairs uniquely informal and non-coercive. And while that faith cannot be reproduced, a moral equivalent is conceivable."[66] Lord Acton writes, "The government of Israelites was a federation, held together by no political authority, but by the unity of race and faith and founded not on physical force, but on a voluntary covenant."[67]

In spite of the importance attached to non-violence in their scriptures, the Jews did not show, during their long history of cruel persecution, much of an inclination to accept the doctrine of non-violent resistance. Israel's attitude towards the neighbouring States has been militant, and occasionally aggressive.

Christianity is Jewish in origin and Jesus said that his doctrine was nothing but the teaching of the Old Testament prophets, i.e., the law of love. Jesus, however, makes the law revolutionary and transforming by raising it from the level of reciprocity to that of non-retaliation and creative purpose.[68] The oft-repeated words of Jesus, "Ye have heard how it hath been said by them of old. . .but I say unto you," bring out the transforming effect of his teaching.

Jesus and his teachings are an important source of Gandhiji's philosophy of satyagraha. Gandhiji once told the Rev. J. J. Doke that it was the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which really awakened him to the rightness and value of satyagraha. The *Gita* deepened the impression

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[63] *Proverbs*, XXV, 21.

[64] *Ibid.*, XXIV, 17.

[65] *Ibid.*, X, 12.

[66] W. E. Hocking, *Man and the State*, p. 93.

[67] Lord Acton, *History of Freedom*, p. 4 (quoted by Prof. Hocking, cited above, p. 93).

[68] J. Macmurray, *The Clue to History*, p. 66; *Y. I.*, Dec. 31, 1931, p. 429.

and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is within You* gave it a permanent form. Later he was also influenced by Ruskin, Thoreau and the passive resistance movement in England. Gandhiji calls Jesus the Prince of satyagrahis and says that he would not hesitate to call himself a Christian if he had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and his own interpretation of it.[69] The Sermon is according to Gandhiji, "the whole of Christianity to him who wanted to live a Christian life". He saw no difference between the Sermon and the *Gita*. "What the Sermon describes in a graphic manner the *Bhagavadgita* reduces to a scientific formula. . . . Today supposing I was deprived of the *Gita* and forgot all its contents but had a copy of the Sermon, I should derive the same joy from it as I do from the *Gita*." According to him " Christianity's particular contribution is that of active love. No other religion says so firmly that God is love and the New Testament is full of the word. Christians, however, as a whole have denied the principle with their wars."[70]

No doubt certain incidents and sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels do not look like strict non-violence. The instances are the use of a whip to expel the money-changers from the temple (John, II, 15), the destruction of the Gadarene swine (Luke, VIII, 26-34), the injunction to buy a sword (Luke, XXII, 36), the parable of a strong man armed (Luke, XI, 21), and his saying, "It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew, XVIII, 6).

But his utterances may have suffered in the process of editing by his disciples, and as against these isolated, ambiguous, pro-violence extracts, we have numerous instances where the Prince of Peace condemned the use of physical force and preached the law of love or non-resistance. Besides, much more important than what Jesus said is what he did by his life and death. His life is the story of intense suffering for the love of humanity. From the beginning of his ministry, when he rejected worldly power and refused to do homage to Satan, to the betrayal, the trial and the supreme redemptive act, the crucifixion, "the grand consummation of his career", the Christ bore

[69] C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 93.

[70] *Y. I.*, Dec. 31, 1931, p. 429; Dec. 22, 1927, p. 425; and Barr, cited above, p. 119.

witness to the power of love and non-resistance—the Christian way of overcoming evil.

The entire teaching of the Christ logically follows from his conception of the universal, loving fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of man. Jesus quotes two commandments of the Old Testament, "Thou shalt love thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The two commandments, says Jesus, are like one another and on them hang all the law and the prophets.[71] And Jesus makes his valuable contribution to these commandments when he says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;

"That you may be the children of your Father that is in Heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."[72]

Jesus thus raises love from the level of natural impulse to that of deliberate intention.[73]

Love rules out the use of force in all its forms. And it is said that Jesus "when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not".[74] His decision to reject force is brought out on the occasion of his arrest. When Peter wishing to defend him drew his sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus rebuked him saying, "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[75]

And we read in the Sermon:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth;

"But I say unto you, that you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

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71 Matthew, XXII, 37-40.

72 *Ibid.*, V, 43-45.

73 J. Macmurray, cited above, p. 68.

74 Peter, II, 23.

75 Matthew, XXVI, 52.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."[76]

We get the supreme instance, the model, of non-violent resistance in Jesus on the Cross as He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[77]

It is wrong to think that Jesus concentrated upon the achievement of an inward morality which left the world to Caesar. He did not eschew all politics, nor did he advocate non-violent resistance only in personal as against group affairs. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," said he, and the true way must necessarily make itself felt in every aspect of life, political, social, moral and spiritual. The records of the Baptism, the Temptation, the entry into Jerusalem and the trials before Caiaphas and Pilate make it clear that Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah. This, indeed, was the charge against him and he admitted it before Pilate.

According to the traditional Hebrew conception the Messiah was a national leader and King, who would overthrow the Roman overlord and restore Jewish liberty. Jesus, no doubt, strove to fulfil his nationalistic mission, but he said that his kingdom was not of this world. He preached the revolutionary doctrine of an altogether different kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. His plan was that the Jews should give up ideas of violence and convert enemies into friends by his technique of love and non-violence and thus help in realizing the kingdom of his vision. His technique, it appears, included co-operation with the temporal power of the Roman Empire so far as it worked for the welfare of the people. Thus he asked Simon to pay the tribute money "for me and thee". This again seems to be his meaning in "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."[78] This does not mean withholding from God what is His due and Jesus revolted against the tyranny of the State as well as tradition, for according to him Sabbath was made for man and not man for Sabbath. In touching words he expressed his disappointment at the refusal of the Jews to accept the non-violent method of action.[79]

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[76] Matthew, V, 38-42.

[77] Luke, XXIII, 34.

[78] *Ibid.*, XX, 25.

[79] See, for example, Luke, XIII, 34, and XXIII, 28-30.

As H. G. Wells points out, the opposition to him and the circumstances of his trial and execution show clearly that to his contemporaries his doctrine stood for a transformation of human life in all its aspects.[80] Jesus thus lived and died for a universal gospel, and to deny that his way is meant for all, collectively as well as individually, is to deny the basic truth of his doctrine.

Though the Christ and his disciples said nothing on the subject of war, the Cross is obviously incompatible with the sword. Early Christians condemned violence and, by their refusal to join the Roman legions, courted severe punishments. But the principle of military service was soon condoned by the Church. In the beginning of the fourth century Constantine patronized the Church, delivering it from prolonged persecution. In 314 A.D. the grateful Church made desertion from imperial armies liable to excommunication and it became the common practice for the Christian priests to accompany the armies. The tradition has lived up to our day in so far as priests are expected to act morally as recruiting-sergeants by blessing the army. It is significant that this moral degradation of the Church started when it acquired a political status.

In the Middle Ages the Christian Church glorified the crusades. At the same time many medieval sects, e.g., Albigenses, Vaudois, Lollards, Paulicians, Manicheans, Weldenses, Mennonites, stood uncompromisingly against all war and violence.

In the beginning of the 16th century Erasmus condemned the whole concept of violence and put forward persuasion as the alternative.

Thoreau, Tolstoy and many others were profoundly influenced by a mid-sixteenth century essay entitled *Of Voluntary Servitude* written by Etienne de La Boetie. He maintained that the authority of the rulers depends on the submission of the people and that it is more moral than physical in character. "It rests less on violence than on respect, that is, on the belief in the right to govern of those in power."[81]

Meanwhile various Anabaptist sects—Mennonites, Simonians, Socinians, Brownists, Dunkers—continued uncompro-

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[80] H. G. Wells, cited above, pp. 531-32.

[81] Quoted by B. de Ligt, cited above, p. 105.

misingly to condemn resort to violence under any circumstances. Many of these sects were non-litigants and "political non-participants", i.e., they were opposed to any participation in State activities which are, according to them, essentially violent. These sects suffered intensely for their convictions and many of them expired, some emigrating to America.

In 1660 was founded the famous Quaker Society of Friends by George Fox. Fox, Barclay and William Penn were the well-known 17th century exponents of Quaker pacifism. To the Quakers pacifism and non-resistance have for their basis the fundamental belief that each man's life is guided by an inner light which transcends even the Bible and which rules out any right to constrain men.[82] But unlike most Anabaptist sects, the Quakers are not against participation in politics. On the other hand, like Asoka, they take a positive attitude—the attitude of spiritualizing politics, curing it of all its violence and conducting the State on non-violent lines. In regard to war, too, the contribution of the Quakers has not only been negative, i.e., refusal to support the military establishment, but also positive in the form of efforts for peace and arbitration.[83]

The Quaker State in Pennsylvania was set up on the basis of Penn's treaty with the Red Indians concluded in 1682. Penn said to the Red Indians, "No advantage shall be taken on either side but all shall be openness and love. . . . We are the same as if one man's body were to be divided into two parts: we are all one flesh and blood."[84] The disputes between the colonists and the Red Indians were to be decided by an arbitral tribunal. The State lasted for seventy years and its failure was due partly to the influx in the colony of other whites who reduced the Quakers to a minority and partly to the fact that troubles with the French on the Indian frontier led the Governor to take military measures inconsistent with the Quaker philosophy.[85] But the Quakers in Pennsylvania as well as other colonies continued to enjoy immunity from violent attacks of the Red Indians. The unique success of the Quaker experiment in administering the State without any military defences whatsoever will stand as a

[82] A. C. F. Beales, *History of Peace*, p. 31.
[83] C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, pp. 92-93 & 97.
[84] Quoted by A. C. F. Beales, cited above, p. 32.
[85] B. de Ligt, cited above, p. 45 and C. M. Case, cited above, p. 102.

source of encouragement to those striving for peace and non-violence.

The Doukhobors are a Russian peace sect. They observe ascetic rules of conduct, are strict vegetarians, are opposed to all forms of violence and deny allegiance to any authority that is not divine. Aylmer Maude calls them "essentially anarchistic".[86] During two hundred years of their existence they have suffered intensely for their pacific convictions. In the nineties of the last century they were harshly persecuted for their refusal to serve in the army. Many of them migrated to Canada in 1899 and have come into conflict with the Government there also. In Russia, too, the new communist regime had to persecute them for their stern refusal to enlist in the army and their dogged resistance to collective farms on the ground that these serve man rather than God.

Coming to the middle of the nineteenth century, the French revolutionary, Anselm Bellegarigue, anticipated to some extent Gandhiji's political technique. He believed that all government was based on violence and hence was an evil and preached the "theory of calm" to overcome the government by a refusal of assistance, i.e., by "abstention and inertia".[87]

Gandhiji was influenced by the words and actions of Henry David Thoreau, the well-known American anarchist who refused to pay his taxes as a protest against slavery in America. He was the first to use the term 'civil disobedience' in one of his speeches in 1849. Gandhiji, however, did not derive his idea of civil disobedience from the writings of Thoreau. The resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before he got the essay of Thoreau on civil disobedience. The movement was then known as Passive Resistance. Gandhiji began to use Thoreau's phrase to explain the struggle to the English readers, but he found that even 'civil disobedience' failed to convey the full meaning of the struggle. So he adopted the phrase 'civil resistance'.[88]

Thoreau's theory may be summed up as the maximum of co-operation with all people and institutions when they lead towards good and non-co-operation when they promote evil.

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[86] A. Maude quoted by C. M. Case, cited above, p. 115.

[87] B. de Ligt, cited above, p. 109-10.

[88] Gandhiji's letter to Kodandarao, dated Sept. 10, 1935.

Unlike Gandhiji, however, Thoreau justified not only passive, but also active (violent) resistance to the American Government in the struggle against slavery. He believed in man's natural impulses to goodness, argued for the supremacy, under all conditions, of conscience and held up the ideal of a future society without any government.

John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* has also been one of the transforming influences that have shaped Gandhiji's views. He has been especially influenced by Ruskin's ideal of manual labour. Gandhiji read this book in South Africa and drew from it three lessons. These are:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.[89]

Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olives* is also one of Gandhiji's favourites.

Gandhiji resembles Ruskin in several respects. Both preach the supremacy of the spirit and trust in the nobleness of human nature; to both character is more important than intelligence; both seek to moralize politics and economics; both emphasize the priority of social regeneration to mere political reform; both greatly distrust machinery and plead that, if employed at all, it should be so used as to free and not enslave men; both insist that the capitalist should adopt a wise paternal attitude in relation to his employees.

Unlike Gandhiji, though like his own master, Carlyle, who equates Manhood suffrage with "Horsehood, Doghood, ditto", Ruskin distrusts the populace. His ideal, like that of Carlyle, is the rule of the wisest.[90] Ruskin believes not in democracy but in "the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even

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[89] *Autobiography*, II, pp. 107-08.

[90] "You have no more business with politics," he said to the Glasgow undergraduates, "than you have with rat-catching. . .but I hate all liberalism as I do Beelzebub, and with Carlyle I stand, we two now alone in England, for God and the Queen." *The Works of Ruskin* (lib. ed.), Vol. XXXIV, pp. 548-49.

of one man to all others" and upholds "the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead or on occasions even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will."[91] Ruskin thus does not stand for non-violence in principle. All the same he is against vengeance and retribution and urges the workers not to take part in armament industries. Unlike Gandhiji again, Ruskin favours the extension of the sphere of State interference.[92]

Gandhiji's views are more akin to those of Tolstoy than to those of Ruskin.

Tolstoy's philosophy, which has been called Christian anarchism, is the application of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount to the solution of modern social and political problems. The core of the Christ's teaching and the one adequate solution for human problems is, according to Tolstoy, love. Love is at the basis of Tolstoy's principles of non-resistance and non-co-operation which, as Aylmer Maude points out, are identical.[93] According to Maude the source of Tolstoy's doctrine is the Gospel text, "Resist not him. . .cloak also."[94]

Tolstoyan non-violence is rooted in the conception that it is a crime to impose one's will on any creature, to force it in any way. To quote from Tolstoy's famous letter to Gandhiji, dated Kocheti, September 7, 1910, "The renunciation of all opposition by force. . .means the law of love unperverted by sophistries. Love, or in other words, the striving of men's souls towards unity and the submissive behaviour to one another that results

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91 Quoted by E. Barker in *Political Thought from Spencer to Today*, p. 193. Another similar passage disparaging majorities is: "In every vital moment the right opinion is in the minority of one. . .see only that you set over every business vital to you, one man of sense, honour and heart." *The Works of Ruskin* (lib. ed.), Vol. XXXI, p. 505.

92 R. H. Wilenski, *John Ruskin*, pp. 296-98.

93 A. Maude's article on "Gandhi and Tolstoy" reprinted in the *Leader*, June 18, 1930. According to Tolstoy the only way to make the world happy is to bring about a condition of the world wherein all beings could love others more than they love themselves. This is how he defines his law of happiness for all beings: "That I love others more than I love my own self." His letter to Romain Rolland, dated 4th Oct., 1887, published in the *Modern Review*, January, 1927, p. 88 (translated by Dr. Kalidas Nag from the original French).

94 Quoted in this chapter on p. 26.

therefrom, represents the highest and indeed the only law of life. . .any employment of force is incompatible with love as the highest law of life and. . .as soon as the use of force appears permissible even in a single case, the law itself is immediately negatived."[95]

Tolstoy believes that the Christian civilization, because it claims to be Christian and permits defence by means of force, has grown up on this strange contradiction, and as the law of love does not prevail, for it admits of no exception, there remains no law but that of the strongest. Tolstoy condemns the State[96] and its machinery, law courts, police and military, private property and capitalism, even the schools, as all these offend against the law of love. He is opposed to the use of force, payment of taxes, and compulsory military service. Organized society, he holds, should be replaced by informal co-operation, though he does not bother about giving the details of the ideal non-violent society.

As regards the method of bringing about such co-operation, Tolstoy is against violence and in favour of love, non-resistance and non-co-operation. He lays great stress on the moral regeneration of the individual. He urges a return to land and preaches the dignity of manual work. Tolstoy is also against legitimate marriage which he calls "domestic prostitution", for marriage leads men and women to use each other as instruments of pleasure. In the *Kreutzer Sonata* he maintains that sexual love is the worst of sins and pleads that the relation between man and wife should be transformed into brotherly and sisterly affection.

The Rev. J. J. Doke calls Gandhiji a disciple of Tolstoy.[97] Gandhiji also considers himself "a devoted admirer who owes much in life to him".[98] He writes, "Next to the late Rajachandra, Tolstoy is one of the three moderns who have exerted the greatest spiritual influence on my life, the third being

95 Leo Tolstoy, *Recollections and Essays*, pp. 435-36.

96 To Tolstoy, in his own language, "the words, *a Christian State* resemble the words *hot ice*. The thing is either not a State using violence or it is not Christian." Quoted by Milford Q. Sibley in his article on "Modern Religious Pacifism" in *American Political Science Review*, June 1943.

97 J. J. Doke, cited above, p. 3.

98 *Y. I.*, I, p. 652.

Ruskin."[99] Gandhiji read *The Kingdom of God is within You* fifty years back in South Africa when he believed in violence and was passing through a crisis of scepticism. "Its reading," he says, "cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in *ahimsa*."[100]

There are striking similarities between the doctrines of these two great modern exponents of non-violence. Both are ever vigilant seekers after truth and uniquely steadfast in its rigorous practice. "The heroine of my writings," wrote Tolstoy, "she whom I love with all the forces of my being, she who always was, is, and will be beautiful, is Truth."[101] Both denounce modern civilization as based on force and exploitation and pandering to the senses and so inherently immoral. Both are opposed to violent methods of fighting evil. Both lay stress on the reform of the individual, his inner self-perfection, as the first step towards social regeneration. Both concern themselves with the purity of means rather than the details of the ideal society. Again, both advocate an ascetic morality and preach extreme simplicity of life, bread-labour and virtual celibacy as being essential for the moral growth of the individual.

Gandhiji is, however, not a thorough-going Tolstoyan. The difference between their doctrines seems to be due to two reasons. Firstly, Gandhiji is far more practical than Tolstoy. Ever in close touch with life, Gandhiji is essentially a man of compromise in non-essentials. The need for compromise, he thinks, arises due to the relative nature of truth as perceived by man. Though scrupulous about his method, unlike Tolstoy, he is ever ready to adapt his actions to the demands of the changing world. The ideal is impossible of complete realization and we must try to approach it, he holds, as far as possible.

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99 *Y. I.*, III, p. 843.

100 The poet-jeweller Rajachandra was a distinguished Jain reformer of Bombay. Gandhiji came into closest association with him on his return from England. He greatly influenced Gandhiji by his moral earnestness and deep religious nature and acted on many occasions as his guide and helper. In particular he helped Gandhiji in the study of the Hindu religion. *Autobiography*, Vol. I, Part II, Ch. I and pp. 323 and 475 ff. Dr. J. N. Farquhar gives a brief account of his views and work in his *Modern Religious Movements*, pp. 327-28.

101 Quoted by Mahadev Desai in an article in *Y. I.*, III, p. 830.

Secondly, Gandhiji's conception of non-violence is slightly different from that of Tolstoy. To the latter non-violence means avoidance of force in all its forms, the former lays emphasis on the motive and defines *ahimsa* as avoidance of injury or pain to any creature out of anger or from a selfish motive. In certain circumstances, however, even killing may be *ahimsa* according to Gandhiji.[102] As life involves some amount of violence, Tolstoy turns away from it; Gandhiji, on the other hand, follows the *Gita* ideal of action without attachment and eagerly participates in life. Due to this vital difference, Gandhiji excels Tolstoy in working out the non-violent technique and in devising ways to remove social evils which Tolstoy so brilliantly exposes and so passionately denounces.

The cult of peace and non-violence has gathered great strength since the time of Tolstoy. This is negatively due to the tremendous increase in the destructiveness of war which has almost reached perfection and has become a far greater threat to mankind than ever before.

Benjamin Tucker, the American anarchist, bases his philosophy on the ground of the intelligent individual's natural self-interest. He recommends passive resistance to the oppressed masses for the reason that modern governments, though they can easily crush violent revolts, cannot overcome passive resistance by military force. If one-fifth of the people, he argues, refuse to pay their taxes, it would cost more to try to collect them than what the rest would pay into the treasury. He advocates the elimination of political authority from society. The State has, according to him, always invaded the principle of liberty. He defines government as "the subjection of the non-invasive individual to an external will".[103] To him democracy is nothing but an invasion upon one man by all other men. Tucker would, therefore, replace the State by voluntary associations, the members of which would retain the right to secede at will. He, however, recognizes the right of defensive associations to employ, against invasive individuals, all repressive and punitive measures now employed by the State. The necessity for such repression will immensely diminish, for when men eliminate the

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102 See Ch. III *infra*.

103 Quoted by F. W. Coker in *Recent Political Thought*, p. 198.

State as well as the inequitable economic system which the State maintains, crimes will naturally disappear.

Since 1915, and particularly since 1919, there has also been growing a movement to eliminate war. Before the last war the War Resisters' International of which the Peace Pledge Union was the British section, extended practically into all the countries of the world. The schemes of peace organizations centred on five fundamentals: arbitration and arbitration treaties, an international authority, codification of international law, sanctions, and disarmament. Comprehensive anti-war propaganda was conducted by peace societies, though there was a lack of agreement among them on defensive war and on the place of non-violence in personal life. It is significant that the establishment of the League of Nations was taken as the fulfilment of many of the aspirations of the peace movement. The present international situation is ample evidence that wars between nations, against which the peace movement has been crusading, cannot be eliminated unless efforts are also made to banish violence from our individual and group life.

Many pacifist thinkers, e.g., Meijer-Wichmann, Roland Holst, Charles Naine, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, etc., insist on the need of harmony between the end and the means. They expose the tragedy of modern socialism—the contradiction between its aim and its method. Its aim is essentially humanitarian —social regeneration and elimination of all forms of violence. But to achieve this aim it uses war, violence, and dictatorship. The use of these tactics develops qualities opposite of those envisaged in the socialist regime and thus the object is defeated.

The last war and the aggression leading to it were a severe blow to pacifism in the West. Even some of the leading thinkers recanted their faith in pure pacifism and supported military collaboration of well-armed States against aggressor States. To this group belonged C. E. M. Joad, Bertrand Russell and Romain Rolland. But at present efforts are being made by pacifists to give a positive and dynamic form to their belief and to devise ways of moulding individual and group life according to the principles of non-violence.

There have been during the last hundred and fifty years numerous instances of the use of non-violent resistance by individuals and groups. It is unnecessary to give details of these

instances or even to mention all of them.[104] Labour strikes have become the common feature of modern economic life. Besides these, non-violence has had its victories in other spheres of life also. Some of the outstanding instances outside India are the non-violent movement of Hungary in the middle of the 19th century under the leadership of Francis Deak, the prevention of a war between Norway and Sweden by socialists of the two countries by means of non-violent direct action in 1905, the heroic non-violent struggle of the people of Western Samoa against the New Zealand Government (1920-1936), the predominantly non-violent resistance of the Norwegian people to the Quisling regime and the German occupying force during the World War II, and the passive resistance of the people of Finland (1898-1917) against the Russian attempt to Russianize the country and damage her autonomy. But group-resistance has mostly been of the passive resistance type.

Gandhiji renovates the age-old philosophy of *ahimsa*. His great distinction consists in his researches in the possibilities of *ahimsa* in all walks of life and its application to large mass movements. Satyagraha, he is convinced, is the only way to solve the problems of mankind. "Non-violence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. Disregard of it is the surest way to destruction."[105] But satyagraha is inseparable from the non-violent outlook on life. To be a real, effective satyagrahi the individual must comprehend the metaphysical and ethical principles in which satyagraha is rooted.

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104 Some of the references for these instances are: Fenner Brockway, *Non-co-operation in Other Lands*; R. B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence*, Ch. VII; C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*; and A. Huxley (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism*, article on "Non-violence"; *Visva Bharati Quarterly* (Gandhi Memorial Peace Number).

105 *H.*, July 15, 1939, p. 201.

CHAPTER II

METAPHYSICAL BASES

"Most religious men I have met," Gandhiji once remarked to Mr. Polak, "are politicians in disguise; I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man."[1] "My bent is not political but religious," he wrote in a letter to Dr. Arundale in 1929.[2] These statements provide a key to Gandhian philosophy. In all his thought and action he takes his stand on the principles of religion and morality. These are the very breath of his being. He says, ". . .at the back of every word that I have uttered since I have known what public life is, and of every act that I have done, there has been a religious consciousness and a downright religious motive."[3]

His political philosophy and political technique are only corollaries of his religious and moral principles. For him politics bereft of religion is a death-trap because it kills the soul, for politics like other human activities must be governed either by religion or irreligion. Without the moral basis supplied by religion life would be a mere maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing'.

By religion, however, he means, not any particular creed—not, for example, Hindu religion, but that which underlies and harmonizes all religions, that "which changes one's nature, which binds one to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless unless it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself."[4] In short, religion means "belief in the ordered moral government of the universe".[5] It is identical with morality and "truth is the substance of morality."[6] It is essentially practical

[1] *Speeches, Appendix* II, p. 40.

[2] Quoted in *Vishal Bharat* (Hindi), October, 1938, p. 401.

[3] *Y. I.*, III, p. 350.

[4] *Speeches*, p. 807.

[5] *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 445.

[6] *Ethical Religion*, pp. 23-24; *Autobiography*, I, pp. 5 and 87.

and in no way world-denying. "There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there'."[7] He believes that the spiritual law does not work on a field of its own, but expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. Thus religion provides a moral basis to all activities. Gandhiji does not know religion apart from human activity; nor does he consider religion "as one of the many activities of mankind".[8]

Politics is concerned with the control and use of State authority which is essentially coercive. So Gandhiji looks upon politics as an unavoidable evil. "If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics today encircle us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake....I am trying to introduce religion into politics."[9] Thus it is religion that compels him not to eschew politics. The goal of life is self-realization which, Gandhiji believes, cannot be achieved unless he identifies himself with the whole of mankind and tries to advance the greatest good of all. This necessarily involves taking part in politics. For the whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes one indivisible whole, and social, economic, political and purely religious work cannot be divided into water-tight compartments.[10] Political evils, for example, political subjection, unsuitable political institutions, etc. are great hindrances to the realization of the greatest good of all, which is possible only in a non-violent State. Political freedom is essential for the emergence of this State. He has, therefore, no doubt whatsoever that "those, who say that religion has nothing to do with politics, do not know what religion means."[11] "...he who does not know what patriotism or feeling for one's country is does not know his true duty or religion."[12]

A living, unshakable faith in God, an insistence on the primacy of spirit, is the core of his philosophy. So immovable is his

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[7] *H.*, July 26, 1942, p. 248.

[8] *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 393; *Diary*, I, p. 185.

[9] *Speeches*, p. 807; Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 98.

[10] *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 393.

[11] *Autobiography*, II, p. 591.

[12] "Gandhiji's African Jail Experiences" in J. H. Holmes, *Mahatma Gandhi, The World Significance*, p. 83.

faith that he feels that he may live without air and water but not without God,[13] and that even if he were cut to pieces, God would give him the strength not to deny Him.[14] He is definitely of the opinion that the fullest life is impossible without such faith and that one is not competent to offer satyagraha unless one has a living faith in God.[15] It is necessary, therefore, to discuss in some detail the reasons why he considers faith in God indispensable for the satyagrahi and also his views about God and soul.

Satyagraha is based on the fundamental truths that the soul remains unconquered and unconquerable even by the mightiest physical force, and that every human being, however degraded, has in him the divine spark, i.e., limitless potentiality for growth and is capable of responding to kind, generous treatment.

Unless one has a living faith in God and in soul-force, he cannot resort to satyagraha whole-heartedly, with entire confidence and to the best advantage. Non-violence apart from God is without any potency. "God is life. Therefore goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute. Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exists only whilst it is a paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We try to become good because we want to reach and realize God."[16] "Mere mechanical adherence to truth and *ahimsa* is likely to break down at the critical moment. . . . God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway."[17] "This (living faith in non-violence) is impossible without a living faith in God. Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the

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13 *H.*, May 14, 1938, p. 109.
14 *Y. I.*, III, p. 504.
15 *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 146.
16 *H.*, Aug. 24, 1947, p. 285.
17 *H.*, July 20, 1947, p. 240.

omnipotence of God also means respect for the lives of even those who may be called opponents or *goondas*."[18] "As a matter of fact in *ahimsa* it is not the votary who acts in his own strength. Strength comes from God."[19] "With the knowledge that the soul survives the body, he (the satyagrahi) is not impatient to see the triumph of truth in the present body. Indeed victory lies in the ability to die in the attempt to make the opponent see the truth which the satyagrahi for the time being expresses."[20] To Gandhiji, therefore, "The first and the last shield and buckler of the non-violent person will be his unwavering faith in God."[21] "The only weapon of the satyagrahi is God, by whatsoever name one knows Him. Without Him the satyagrahi is devoid of strength before an opponent armed with monstrous weapons. But he who accepts God as his only protector will remain unbent before the mightiest earthly power."[22]

On the other hand dismissal or negation of God from common affairs gives rise to a feeling of helplessness and induces people to put their faith in violence. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1921, "We have become atheists for all practical purposes. And therefore we believe that in the long run we must rely upon physical force for our protection."[23]

Let this not be dismissed as the irrational superstition of a mystic. God is not a mere escape or an idle fiction. God is the integrating principle, the central truth of man. The finite cannot be understood unless we know it as rooted in the Infinite. Without faith in God man can have faith neither in himself nor in others. It is significant that the non-violent resisters of the past have almost always been firm believers in God.[24] On the other hand communism, socialism and capitalism are rooted in materialism.

Gandhiji does not mind how one defines God; for he is

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18 *H.*, June 18, 1938, p. 152.

19 *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 256.

20 *Speeches*, p. 504.

21 *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 318.

22 *H.*, Oct. 19, 1940, p. 319.

23 *Y. I.*, I, p. 720.

24 Many Western pacifist thinkers would agree with Gandhiji. Max Plowman of the Peace Pledge Union insists that for a pacifist it is essential to believe in God as "the symbol of supreme value" and "incarnate in every individual". Quoted in *Harijan*, June 25, 1938, p. 163.

conscious that "there are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable."[25] "God is indescribable and impenetrable, because he is in everybody and in everything. . . . He is in everything. . . so no description of Him is adequate."[26] As for himself, Gandhiji describes Him as pure undefiled consciousness, an undefinable mysterious power that pervades every thing, purest essence, etc. He specially identifies Him with the dumb poor millions, Love and above all Truth. "The word *Satya* (Truth) is derived from *sat* which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth." That is why *Satya* or Truth is the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth.[27] Nobody, not even the atheist, demurs to the necessity or the power of Truth. Besides, "God is Truth, but God is many other things also."[28] That is why Gandhiji prefers to say that Truth is God,[28] and calls it the most perfect definition of God so far as human speech can go.[29]

God or Truth, he believes, is not only the immanent reality but is also transcendent; He is not only in us but also out of us, not only the life of the Universe, but also beyond it as its Creator, Sustainer and Judge.[30]

The Hindu conception of God is so subtle and comprehensive that it is not easy to specify it. Infinity, perfection, absoluteness are constantly predicated of Him, but at the same time it is clearly maintained that God is beyond all predications. In fact all predications are given only to be rejected as inadequate. While the conception of God is transcendental, the equation of the human soul and God is also a well-known doctrine. The popular Hindu idea of God as the Supreme Person with threefold aspects or powers of creation, preservation and destruction cannot therefore be ruled out as unrooted in tradition. In fact the determinate or the theistic conception of God may be

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25 *Autobiography*, I, p. 7.

26 Barr, p. 100.

27 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 1.

28 *H.*, May 25, 1935, p. 115.

29 *Diary*, I, p. 106. Gandhiji had in his youth chosen "truth" as most truly defining God. He had then said, "God is truth". But in 1929 he advanced another step and began to say, "Truth is God". *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 189. See also *H.*, Aug. 18, 1946, p. 268, "His Last Article".

30 *H.*, Nov. 14, 1936, p. 314; Jan. 20, 1937, pp. 407 and 410; *Y. I.*, II, p. 497.

regarded "as the traditional vehicle of man's profoundest metaphysical insights".[31]

Gandhiji is conscious that God is, strictly speaking, not a person, but Truth, His own Law,[32] yet he believes that God is the personal God to those who need His touch, and a devotee can, through prayer and purification, establish personal communion with Him. In his writings we find far greater stress on love of God than on His functions of *srishti* and *laya* (creation and destruction).

God is the Creator, the Ruler and the Lord of the Universe and not a blade of grass moves but by His will.[33]

God is our judge, but He is long-suffering and patient and issues warnings to us.[34] He is also terrible. "He metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbours.... With Him ignorance is no excuse."[35] On numerous occasions, when Gandhiji felt that he had made a mistake, he also felt that God had warned him, and he retraced his steps. Even natural calamities, he believes, are no mere divine caprice but come to mankind as just retribution for their sins.[36]

God is also the guide and the help of the helpless. A true *Vaishnava*, Gandhiji was conscious of God every minute of his life whether asleep or awake.[37] He pined "to see God face to face" and often had "had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God".[38] It was an unbroken torture to him that he was far from Him.[39] He felt the sense of entire dependence on Him, humbly sought His guidance and found that His voice had been increasingly audible as the years rolled by.[40] In the darkest

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31 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy cited in Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 382.

32 *H.*, March 23, 1940, p. 55.

33 *H.*, Nov. 14, 1936, pp. 407 and 410.

34 *Y. I.*, III, p. 178.

35 *Y. I.*, I, p. 497.

36 *H.*, Feb. 2, 1934, pp. 1 and 14. Gandhiji discusses the reasons for this belief of his in *Harijan*, April 6, 1934, p. 61 and June 8, 1935, p. 135.

37 *Y. I.*, II, p. 65. "With my hand on my breast, I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God."

38 *Autobiography*, I, pp. 4 and 8.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

40 *H.*, May 6, 1933. Once in answer to a question if he had any mystical experience he said, "If by mystical experience you mean visions, no....But I am very sure of the voice which guides me." Barr, p. 120.

despair, in the most terrible trial, at the last moment His help never failed Gandhiji, and this help was, to him, "the visible finger of the invisible God".[41] Often in the name of God, in answer to His voice, he undertook fasts. And he had real mystic experiences. Here is one of these in his own words:

"It relates to my 21 days' fast for the removal of untouchability. I had gone to sleep...at about 12 o'clock in the night something wakes me up suddenly and some voice... whispers, 'Thou must go on a fast.'

'How many days?' I ask.

The voice again said, 'Twenty-one days.'

'When does it begin?' I ask.

It says, 'You begin tomorrow.'

....That kind of experience has never happened in my life before or after that date."[42] "...My mind was unprepared for it, disinclined for it. But the thing came to me as clearly as anything could be."[43] On another occasion he described the experience in these words, "I saw no form....But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain it was the Voice and the struggle ceased. I was calm....The determination was made accordingly, the date and the hour of the fast was fixed...."[44]

Though he sometimes uses the language of a theist, Gandhiji is, in his ideas about God, extremely catholic. We have seen how he identifies God with Truth. He also identifies Him with Love, Ethics and Law, Conscience, etc. God, he once said,

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41 *Autobiography*, II, p. 432.

42 *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373.

43 *H.*, May 14, 1938, p. 110. The short-sightedness of modern scientific outlook may rule out as mere delusion such uncommon spiritual experiences. But according to the Indian tradition, if a seeker has integrated his personality and risen to the level of what the *Gita* describes as *buddhi-yoga* (*Gita*. II, 49 and 51; X, 10; XVIII, 57), he can have an insight into Reality and discern Truth. Undoubtedly for the last 60 years of his life the one constant endeavour of Gandhiji had been progressive self-integration and the steadfast pursuit of spiritual discipline essential for the *sthitaprajna*.

44 *H.*, May 6, 1933.

is "faith in oneself multiplied to the nth degree".[45] "You believe in some principle, clothe it with life, and say that it is your God. . . .I should think it enough."[46]

To Gandhiji there is no antithesis between God and man. The soul is the only reality in man as well as in the lower order of creation. It transcends time and space and unifies all apparently separate existents. "I believe," he writes, "in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies we have but one soul." "I believe in *advaita*. I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives."[47] Gandhiji also subscribes to the belief that human beings are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of spiritual identity.[48] The relation between God and the individual soul is that if the individual shatters the chains of egotism and melts into the ocean of humanity he shares its dignity; on the other hand if he feels that he is something, he sets up a barrier between God and himself. ". . .to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God."[49]

This great truth, the fundamental unity of all life, a principle far higher than that of the mere brotherhood of man, makes man not the lord but servant of God's creation.[50] The unity of soul and its nature lead to another conclusion of great significance to his philosophy. The soul is the Godhead within man; it is self-acting; it persists even after death; its existence does not depend upon the physical body. Hence whatever happens to one body must affect the whole of matter and the whole of spirit.[51] That is why if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.[52]

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45 *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 151.

46 *H.*, June 17, 1939, p. 167.

47 *Y. I.*, II, p. 421. The famous texts *Tat twamasi* (Thou art That) and *Soham* (I am He) and the statement of Jesus, "I and My Father are one" and the Biblical statement, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him." express this very idea of consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God.

48 *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, p. 82.

49 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 46.

50 *H.*, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 365.

51 *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, pp. 326-27.

52 *Y. I.*, II, p. 421.

There is obviously no comparison between soul-force and physical force. "'Great as the other forces of the world are... soul-force is the greatest of all."[53] He identifies soul-force with non-violence and points out that imperfect man cannot grasp the whole of that Essence—he would not be able to bear its full blaze—but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within him, can work wonders.[54]

But what is the basis of his belief in the existence of God and soul? The question is vital to Gandhiji's political philosophy, for Gandhiji identifies Truth with God, and so the way of apprehending spiritual reality indicates how in ethically baffling situations, the satyagrahi determines the right course of action.

According to many thinkers reality cannot be apprehended either by the senses or by reasoning. Sense perception cannot go beyond the external qualities of objects. Many Western philosophers, e.g., Hegel, Bosanquet, etc., hold that the ultimate nature of the universe can be grasped by thought or reason. According to them the real is rational. Thus Bosanquet defines reality as the object affirmed by thought. But intellect, it has been pointed out, cannot grasp the self, the knower, the condition and the pre-supposition of all knowledge. Thus 'I am' does not depend on 'I think', for then the latter will have to be proved and so on to an infinite regress. Consciousness of self cannot come by reasoning. Even as regards external objects discursive intellect confines itself to the discernible aspects. Thus conceptual knowledge about a thing is only the appearance of a thing, it is not the reality.

Gandhiji also considers the senses and reasoning as inadequate media of apprehending the Absolute Reality. God, says he, "is indescribable, inconceivable and immeasurable". God transcends the senses and the intellect. "We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses because He is beyond them. We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music."[55] "The intellect, if anything, acts as a barrier."[56] So realization must be

[53] *H.*, August 22, 1936, p. 220.
[54] *H.*, Oct. 30, 1937, p. 326.
[55] *H.*, June 13, 1936, p. 141.
[56] *H.*, June 18, 1938, p. 153.

outside the senses and intellect, it must have for its basis a living faith. The source of faith is the heart. "God cannot be realized through intellect. Intellect can only lead to a certain extent and no further. It is a matter of faith and experience derived from that faith....Full faith does not feel the want of experience."[57] "...That which is beyond reason is surely not unreasonable....To ask anybody to believe without proof what is capable of proof would be unreasonable....But for an experienced person to ask another to believe without being able to prove that there is God is humbly to confess his limitations and to ask another to accept in faith the statement of his experience...without faith this world would come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want. The formula ...for guidance is rejection of every demand for faith where a matter is capable of present proof and unquestioned acceptance on faith of that which is itself incapable of proof except through personal experience."[58] "Soul or God is not the object of knowledge. He is Himself the knower and so He is beyond the intellect. There are two stages in knowing God. The first is faith and the second and the ultimate stage is experience-knowledge arising from it (faith)."[59] Thus "Faith does not contradict reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the purview of reason."[60] "Faith is nothing but a living, wide awake consciousness of God within."[61]

But though God transcends the intellect, "it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent."[62] What Gandhiji means by this statement seems to be that though intellect has its limitations, it leaves us free, as Kant also held, to believe in the existence of God.

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57 *H.*, Aug. 4, 1946, p. 249.

58 *Y. I.*, III, p. 143.

59 Gandhiji's letter quoted in *Diary* I, p. 135.

60 *H.*, March 6, 1937, p. 26.

61 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1116.

62 *Y. I.*, III, p. 870.

One of the arguments that Gandhiji gives is that the universe cannot be interpreted without postulating a transcendent reference. To quote him "...there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings and, thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J. C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That law then which governs all life is God. Law and the law-giver are one."[63]

Moreover, the method of religion, Gandhiji points out, is not far different from that of science. Scientific truths can be verified only by following the prescription given for comprehending the facts which are taken for granted. Thus we cannot understand electricity except by the galvanometer test. "Precisely in that manner speak the *rishis* and the prophets. They say anybody following the path they have trodden can realize God."[64] To reject the testimony of the scriptures of the world and the experience of an unbroken line of *rishis* and prophets is to deny oneself.[65]

Further, our denial of God and His law will not liberate us from its operation, whereas humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life's journey easier.[66]

It is unnecessary to enter into a discussion of these reasons. Kant has shown that understanding is incapable of comprehending the noumenal order and that all arguments employed to prove the existence of God are defective. Gandhiji himself believes that realization is impossible through the senses and reason. Reason can only demonstrate the rationality of the conviction about the existence of God when this conviction arises through faith.

To sum up, Gandhiji insists that the Divine is the central truth in man, that firm faith in the Divinity or God is indispensable for good life as well as for the use of non-violent resistance, and that other allegiances and obligations are binding in so far as they are consistent with the basic loyalty to truth. No one will, we hope, dispute that Gandhiji is extremely catholic

63 *Y. I.*, III, p. 871.
64 *H.*, June 13, 1936, p. 140.
65 *Y. I.*, III, p. 871; *H.*, June 13, 1936, p. 140.
66 *Y. I.*, III, p. 871.

in his conception of God. God is to him only another name for the Reality, the Truth, the Law, the Harmony that pervades the universe. His view that belief in God and soul is a matter of faith has the support of saints and prophets.

Gandhiji believes in the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth. According to him, "The law of *karma* is inexorable and impossible of evasion. There is thus hardly any need for God to interfere. He laid down the law and as it were retired."[67] "We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future."[68]

As for the doctrine of rebirth, he writes, "I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted."[69]

These two doctrines are no mere unproved dogmas; they are laws of life deduced by the Indian seers from spiritual insight and verified by experience. The law of *karma* has been called the moral law or the law of moral continuity. It is the law governing human growth. According to Indian tradition our actions, i.e., those that are motived, leave behind *samskaras*. These are dynamic and causal factors and determine our future not only in this life but also in subsequent lives. According to this law our future will grow out of the present even as the latter is the outcome of our past. However, the emphasis is not so much on retribution as on continuity. The doctrine of *karma* is the only rational explanation of human inequality, at least if we admit a purposive Reality behind the universe.

As for the theory of rebirth, which has been current among the Hindus since the time of the *Rig Veda*, it stands to reason that so far as man has not fully realized himself he should continue to have opportunities for self-development, and death should not put an end to these opportunities.

The acceptance of the law of *karma*, however, does not mean to Gandhiji that our life and activities are completely

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67 *Autobiography*, I, p. 563. The Christian scriptures also refer to the law. Thus, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians, VI, 7. Jesus said on the Mount, "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." Matt., VII, 1-2.

68 *H.*, June 8, 1947, p. 176.

69 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1204.

determined. Such determination paralyzes moral effort and cuts at the very root of ethics. It also denies creativeness to the human spirit and deprives man of the privilege of establishing his own government. There is no antithesis between the law of *karma* and the freedom of will. In fact, the doctrine of *karma* implies freedom, for it lays down that man is the architect of his own destiny. Continuity with the past implies creative freedom of the individual. No doubt our previous *karmas* limit the range for the exercise of our free will. "The free will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck."[70] But the little freedom that we have is real in the sense that we are free to choose how we use that freedom.[71] God, the greatest democrat the world knows, Gandhiji points out, "leaves us unfettered to make our own choice between evil and good."[72] The right to err, which means the freedom to try experiments, is the condition of progress.

But though our will is free, "we cannot command results; we can only strive."[73] Besides, "Man can change temperament, can control it, but cannot eradicate it. God has not given him so much liberty. If the leopard can change his spots then only can man modify the peculiarities of his spiritual constitution."[74] According to him man can counteract the effect of past mistakes by attaining complete detachment.[75] But "In spite of the greatest effort to be detached, no man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or of his upbringing."[76] Thus Gandhiji does not believe in complete freedom which might enable man to sever himself from or transcend nature. Such freedom will mean chaos.

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70 *H.*, March 23, 1940, p. 55.

71 *Y. I.*, II, p. 497. Many thinkers hold that the present, though conditioned by the past, is not determined by it and that man uses the posited future to control his behaviour. See, for example, David L. Miller, "The Calendar Theory of Freedom", in *Journal of Philosophy*, XLI, 12, pp. 320 ff. The well-known postulate of modern social thought that cause implies a statistical probability of the occurrence of the effect rather than absolute control over it, also rules out absolute determinism.

72 *Y. I.*, March 5, 1925, p. 81.

73 *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 112.

74 *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 219.

75 *H.*, April 7, 1946, p. 72.

76 *Y. I.*, Jan. 30, 1930, p. 37.

Due to his belief in the spiritual nature of man, Gandhiji rejects the commonly accepted view that man is entirely the creature of his *milieu*. He does not, however, underrate the influence of the latter: "The majority of people are controlled by their environment."[77] But he holds that man should try to live by self-direction, i.e., by the exercise of his will, rather than by mere habit.[78]

Closely connected with the problem of free will is the problem of evil. Gandhiji says that he "cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method."[79] Evil, however, is real only from the limited human standpoint. For God there is nothing good, nothing evil.[80] But the conception of relativity of good and evil is not acceptable to him, for its application to problems of actual life would lead us morally astray.[81] "Good and evil are, for human purposes, from each other distinct and incompatible, being symbolic of light and darkness. . . ."[82] "Good was self-existent, evil was not. It was like a parasite living on and round good. It would die of itself when the support that good gave was withdrawn."[83] "Evil in itself is sterile. It is self-destructive, it exists and flourishes through the implication of good that is in it. Science teaches us that a lever cannot move a body unless it has got a resting point outside the body against which it is applied. Similarly in order to overcome evil one must stand wholly outside it, that is, on the firm solid ground of unadulterated good."[84] Thus purity of means is essential for minimizing evil. But while insisting on the purity of means he is conscious that "What is good under certain conditions can become an evil or a sin under a different set of conditions."[85]

He is not oblivious of the place of evil in the scheme of progress. Evolution, he points out, is always experimental, and all

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77 *Y. I.*, III, p. 314.

78 N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, p. 203.

79 *Y. I.*, III, p. 872.

80 *H.*, Sept. 2, 1935, p. 233.

81 *Y. I.*, I, p. 680.

82 *H.*, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 9.

83 *H.*, Sept. 14, 1947, pp. 323-24.

84 *Y. I.*, I, pp. 225-26.

85 *H.*, June 9, 1946, p. 172.

progress is gained through mistakes and their rectification. Besides, the principles of *karma* and rebirth suggest that through a gradual process man will be able to minimize evil.

Gandhiji is, however, concerned not so much with philosophical explanation of evil as with the specific kinds of evil, political, social and economic. "I know too," he wrote in 1928, "that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself."[86] All through his long public life his preoccupation had been a relentless war against evil. In this crusade he did not neglect the *milieu*. He devised a new moral strategy. His philosophy deals with the method of regulating, along non-violent lines, group-life in its political, economic, national and international aspects. But nearest his heart, in the centre of his consciousness, is the individual. The first step lies with the individual whose moral regeneration is the primary concern of Gandhiji's philosophy. He discusses the goal of human life and the way the individual should live to realize this goal. These ethical principles are an integral part of Gandhiji's political philosophy, for a man can become a good citizen and a true satyagrahi only by disciplining his life according to these principles.

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[86] *Y. I.*, III, p. 872.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES—THE END AND THE MEANS

The ultimate object of man's life is, according to Gandhiji, self-realization. Self-realization means seeing God face to face, realizing Absolute Truth, attaining *moksha* or knowing oneself. He believes in the principle of spiritual unity. So the immediate service of human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and to be one with it. The individual must work not only for his own spiritual freedom but also for that of his fellow beings. Thus Gandhiji reconciles self-realization with service to society. The conception that salvation can be sought in the seclusion of solitude is not acceptable to him. Self-realization to him means realization of "the greatest good of all".[1] "The greatest good of all", or, as he calls it in Gujarati, *sarvodaya*, also includes political progress, for political degeneration is a great hindrance to moral and spiritual regeneration. Politics, however, is only a part of this aim. Gandhiji also insists that the best way to serve all is to serve one's own country, for one's countrymen are one's nearest neighbours.[2]

He rejects the utilitarian doctrine of "the greatest good of the greatest number" as the end of life. For "it means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent the interest of 49 per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice."[3] In 1926 he wrote, "He (the *ahimsaist*) will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal. . . . The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greater number, and therefore he and the utilitarian will converge at many points in their career but there does come a time when they must part company, and even work in opposite

[1] *Y. I.*, II, p. 956.

[2] *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226. For a detailed discussion of Gandhiji's emphasis on the neighbourhood see ch. IV *infra*.

[3] *Diary* I, p. 201.

directions. The utilitarian to be logical will never sacrifice himself. The absolutist will even sacrifice himself."[4]

Closely connected with the ultimate end is the problem of means. Communists, Fascists as well as most practical politicians believe in the maxim, "the end justifies the means." That is, if the end is desirable, even means like cunning, deceit and violence are justified, if they help us to achieve the end.

In Gandhian philosophy means and ends are convertible terms.[5] The two are inseparable and should be equally pure. That the end is high and laudable is not enough for him, the means too must be moral. In fact, the means are, to him, everything.[6]

This emphasis on means is partly due to the fact that man can only strive, he cannot command results. We can control the means but not the end. Besides, the end grows out of the means. To quote Gandhiji, "As the means so the end."[7] "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."[8] The *Gita* doctrine of *nishkama karma* (action without attachment) also teaches us that a good deed produces only a good result.[9] So Gandhiji believes that "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself,"[10] and that realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of means.[11] To him, "the attempt made to win *swaraj* is *swaraj* itself."[12]

Further, Gandhiji has personal experience of how, whenever he compromised the means, progress on the path of truth and non-violence received a setback. The Rajkot affair is an instance. By seeking the intervention of the Paramount power—a sign of impatience which is a form of violence—he failed to convert the opponent.

Gandhiji's theory seems to be the only correct view of the

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4 *Y. I.*, II, p. 956.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 435.
6 *Ibid.*, p. 364.
7 *Ibid.*, p. 364.
8 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 60.
9 *Y. I.*, I, p. 714.
10 *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8.
11 *Y. I.*, II, p. 364.
12 *Speeches*, p. 720.

relation between the end and the means. The opposite theory that the good end justifies all means, even violent means, is dangerous in practice and unsound ethically. The theory permits recourse to violence, fraud, untruth, opportunism, etc., provided the end is just. But these means, instead of helping us to advance on the path of progress, lead us to regard human beings as means rather than ends, deaden our finer feelings and result in oppression and cruelty. Besides, there can generally be no certainty that a violent action is always motivated only by a good end. The tyrant and the terrorist invariably plead laudable ends when perpetrating the most outrageous crimes. Further, it is dangerous ethics to make the success of an action or policy the criterion of its propriety. There is, moreover, all the difference between what passes for success, quick results mostly short-lived, and real, enduring achievements that require a long period of gestation. Violence and deception, terror and Machiavellian diplomacy might seem to score for the time being over truth and love, justice and open dealing. But the victory is partial and transitory and the gains mere burdens. Good means alone can lead us to lasting peace and progress. History as well as contemporary experience teach us that violence engenders violence, revenge leads to counter-revenge and a war sows the seeds of further wars. The two world wars, ostensibly fought for justice and democracy, bear ample testimony to the truth of this argument.

If we believe in the ultimate aim stated above and in the fundamental unity of life, good ends will mean, in the words of Aldous Huxley, "a state of greatest possible unification". This can be obviously achieved by intrinsically unifying, i.e., good means and not by separative or divisive, i.e., bad means.[13] According to Tolstoy, "All that tend to unify mankind belong to the Good and the Beautiful. All that tend to disunite are Evil and Ugly."[14]

Gandhiji's emphasis on the importance of means should not be misconstrued as implying that the end is, with him, only a secondary consideration. He believes that the means and the end are inseparably connected and is eager that the means used

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[13] A. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, pp. 320-21.

[14] A letter of Tolstoy to Romain Rolland translated from the French by Dr. Kalidas Nag. *Modern Review*, Jan. 1927.

should in no way detract from the moral character of our end. Hence his repeated insistence that our means must be as pure as our end and that in regard to our means we must take our stand on "the firm solid ground of unadulterated good". His effort to give concrete expression, in the form of satyagraha, to this principle of moral approximation of the end and the means is, perhaps, the most unique contribution of our times to the philosophy and technique of revolution.

What then are the means that Gandhiji prescribes for the realization of the ultimate end? Self-realization, he says, requires self-purification.[15] Self-purification requires an ethical discipline. According to Gandhiji, "...he who is not prepared to order his life in unquestioning obedience to the laws of morality cannot be said to be a man in the full sense of the word."[16] This ethical outlook is the backbone of Gandhiji's political philosophy even as his ethics has for its foundation his metaphysical principles. To him the moral discipline of the individual is the most important means of social reconstruction, and it is as vital to his philosophy as the capture of political power and State machinery is to Socialism and Fascism. The content of the ethical discipline also determines the structure of the non-violent State.

Gandhiji gives us the moral principles which should be observed as vows by mankind in general. Most of these principles, which he laid down in 1916 for being observed in the Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, are the maxims of life enjoined for thousands of years by the Hindu *shastras* as being indispensable for moral growth. The first five of these vows, i.e., *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *asteya* (non-stealing), *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *brahmacharya* (celibacy), are *yamas* or cardinal restraints. For long years before 1916 Gandhiji had endeavoured to live up to these ideals, and he modified and amplified them in the light of his experience.

Vows,[17] Gandhiji thinks, are a moral discipline absolutely necessary for self-realization. They are a source of strength, for they mean unflinching determination to observe moral laws. In

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15 *Autobiography*, II, p. 592.

16 *Ethical Religion*, p. 36.

17 According to Gandhiji, "To do at any cost something that one ought to do constitutes a vow." *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 75.

the absence of vows we may be unable to stand against temptations and may bend before discomforts. The refusal to take vows, moreover, is an indication of weakness and betrays a subtle desire for the things to be avoided. Vows should, however, be taken only on points of universally recognized principles.[18] But "the taking of a vow does not mean that we are able to observe it completely from the very beginning, it does mean constant and honest effort in thought, word and deed with a view to its fulfilment."[19] When in doubt about vows, the seeker should interpret them against himself, i.e., in favour of greater restriction.[20]

Truth, the pole-star of his life and philosophy, comes first among these vows.[21]

Gandhiji distinguishes between truth as a vow or means, i.e., relative truth as perceived by finite individuals in relation to a particular set of thoughts and circumstances, and Truth as the *summum bonum*, i.e., Absolute, Universal, Infinite Truth which exists beyond and unconditioned by space and time.

In the sense of Absolute Truth Gandhiji identifies Truth with God. Truth or *Satya*, which means 'real existent', is "the only correct and fully significant name of God". Truth in perfection includes all Knowledge (*Chit*) and the latter is the source of eternal Bliss (*Ananda*). Hence we know God as *Sat-chit-ananda*, one who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.[22] Gandhiji worships God as Truth only; he is devoted to none but Truth.[23]

The entire philosophy of satyagraha is based on the fact that Truth alone can be victorious, for Truth is 'that which *is*', while untruth means 'non-existent'. "If untruth does not so much as exist its victory is out of the question. And truth being that which *is* can never be destroyed."[24]

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18 *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 9, 73 and 76. *Autobiography*, I, p. 481.

19 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 27.

20 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 43.

21 Cf. Jesus, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John, VIII, 32. Again, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." John, XVIII, 37.

22 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 2.

23 *Autobiography*, I, p. 7; *H.*, May 25, 1935, p. 115.

24 *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 433.

But man, even if he is a great soul like Gandhiji can have but faint, fleeting glimpses of Absolute Truth.[25] "We cannot through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body see face to face Truth which is Eternal."[26]

How then to realize Absolute Truth? According to Gandhiji, to advance towards Absolute Truth, we should hold by the relative truth, i.e., what we consider to be truth.[27] To realize *satya* one must be a satyagrahi. Devotion to *satya* as we know it, being true to the light as we see it, is the road to the realization of Eternal Truth. "What a pure heart feels at a particular time is truth; by remaining firm on that, undiluted truth can be attained."[28] "Truth is by nature self-evident." But man being imperfect surrounds it with cobwebs of ignorance. Ignorance is the root of all evil. As the purificatory discipline removes ignorance, truth shines clear.[29] To Gandhiji there is no religion higher than truth.[30]

The law of Truth does not refer merely to truth of speech, it also refers to truth of action and, what is equally important, truth of thought. Nor is truth a "cloistered virtue". Truth has reference to all spheres of life including politics. Search for truth, which should be pursued through the service of all, means ceaseless effort for regeneration in all spheres of life and willingness to risk one's all for the cause which one clearly conceives to be true. If the individual fails to do so he departs from the path of truth, denies the soul in himself, tries to frustrate reality and, as a consequence, courts moral ruin. Truth thus also means just social relations including political freedom of one's own country as well as of other countries.

Truth rules out prejudice, evasion, secrecy and deception as well as exaggeration, suppression or modification of reality. It requires that we should never be afraid of confessing our mistakes or retracing our steps. Truth also implies mutual toleration and avoidance of dogmatism and bitterness; for truth as discerned by man is always relative and fragmentary. While,

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25 *Autobiography*, I, p. 8; *Autobiography*, II, p. 590.
26 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 9.
27 *H.*, May 25, 1935, p. 114; *Autobiography*, I, p. 8.
28 *H.*, Nov. 27, 1949, p. 340.
29 *Y. I.*, II, p. 781.
30 *Ethical Religion*, p. 51.

therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon others will be an insufferable interference with their freedom of conscience.[31] Moreover, "bitterness blurs our vision and to that extent disables one from seeing even the limited truth."[32] Bitterness or harshness also offends against the principle of the fundamental unity of soul; it makes us forget the unity and is divisive and separative. According to Gandhiji, therefore, "one had better not speak it (truth) if one cannot do so in a gentle way....Truth without non-violence is not truth but untruth."[33] But non-violent truth or gentle speech does not mean hypocrisy or circumlocutory speech. "Harsh truth may be uttered courteously and gently, but the words would read hard. To be truthful you must call a liar a liar—harsh words perhaps, but the use is inevitable."[34] To illustrate the point Gandhiji gives the instance of Jesus: "Jesus knew the generation of vipers, minced no words in describing them but pleaded for mercy for them."[35] The intention behind the words must not be to harm the opponent.

Gandhiji dedicated his life to the searching quest of truth in its various aspects in his own life as well as in that of his nation. The method of his researches is the usual scientific method of observation, hypothesis and experiments. Whenever he noticed some error he readily admitted it and varied the experiment so as to discover the proper way of solving the particular social problem. He always made the first test of an hypothesis on himself, before he asked any one else to try it.[36] In the words of R. B. Gregg "....he is a great scientist, in the realm of social truth. He is great because of his choice of problems, because of his methods of solution, because of the persistence and thoroughness of his search and because of the profundity of his knowledge of the human heart."[37] Gandhiji himself said in 1933, "The science of satyagraha...has come to me...by scientific research. It is a result of the hardest labour

[31] *Y. I.*, II, p. 1182.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 1286.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 1295.
[34] *H.*, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 414.
[35] *H.*, Dec. 19, 1936, p. 362.
[36] S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 80.
[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

a human being is capable of. I have applied to this research all the skill of a scientist."[38]

According to Gandhiji every man has the right and the capacity to determine truth for himself,[39] and it is this essential virtue, viz., the ability to determine truth for himself, which separates man from the brute. Undoubtedly for a person who seeks to know truth by his own efforts, a high moral and intellectual equipment is necessary. "Those who have made experiments (with truth) have come to the conclusion that....Strict preliminary discipline is necessary to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm." But others, who merely apprehend, accept and pursue this truth known by developed souls and suffer in the pursuit of this truth, need not be so highly developed. This is borne out by the history of satyagraha movements in India and outside. Indians in South Africa or the Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province who suffered intensely for the sake of truth were people of ordinary cultural and moral level. Gandhiji believes that the masses have the capacity to suffer for truth, though this capacity, he admits, may be under certain circumstances limited.

Independent search after truth demands an intensely moral life. In Gandhiji's opinion, constant endeavour (*abhyasa*), indifference to other interests of life (*vairagya*) and the vows of truth, non-violence, *brahmacharya*, non-stealing, non-possession, etc. are indispensable for the realization of truth. Only those who undergo this moral discipline can properly claim to hear the voice of conscience in regard to truth. Gandhiji holds that these observances are deducible from Truth and are meant to subserve it.[40]

Truth can be realized only by means of *ahimsa*. Violence which has its roots in divisive propensities like anger, selfishness, lust etc., cannot take us to the goal. Violence arises out of ignorance. It is untruth (*asatya*), i.e., non-existent. If untruth endured and nothing were true to itself and to others, if all laws of life and nature were uncertain and undependable, the universe would turn into chaos.

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[38] *Conversations*, p. 41.

[39] For Gandhiji's views given in this paragraph, see *Y. I.*, I, pp. 34-36 and *Y. I.*, Dec. 31, 1931, p. 421.

[40] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 16.

But why is violence untruth? For one thing truth as known to man is relative and never absolute. People look at a thing from different angles and conscience is not the same thing for all. No man can claim to be absolutely in the right. Pursuit of truth, therefore, does not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent who must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy, i.e., by self-suffering.[41] For even if the cause is unjust, none else except the person pursuing it suffers.

Besides, violence attacks not only the sin and the evil but also the sinner and the evil-doer. This is offending against the great truth, the unity and sacredness of all being.[42] Pursuit of truth means realization of this unity through love and service of all, i.e., willingness to suffer for all. Violence interferes with the realization of this unity both in the case of the violent man and his victim by arousing in them feelings of anger, hatred, fear, etc.

Moreover, truth which is the object of our quest is not outside ourselves but within. The more we take to violence in dealing with those who create difficulties, the more we recede from truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without, we neglect the real enemy within.[43]

Ahimsa is thus the practical application of the great truth of spiritual unity or, as Gregg terms it, "the spiritual democracy" of all life. In the words of Gandhiji, "The basic principle on which the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe."[44]

To Gandhiji *ahimsa* is the heart of all religion. The means and the end are one,[45] so *ahimsa* is truth itself, its very soul, its maturest fruit. Truth and *ahimsa* are like the two sides of a smooth unstamped metallic disc and are so intertwined that it is difficult to disentangle and separate them.[46]

Nevertheless *ahimsa* is the means, truth is the end. That is why Gandhiji is not so much the votary of *ahimsa* as he is

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[41] *Y. I.*, I, p. 36; *Y. I.*, II, p. 1182; *Speeches*, p. 501; *Hind Swaraj*, p. 69.
[42] *Autobiography*, II, pp. 53-54.
[43] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 10.
[44] *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 327.
[45] *Y. I.*, III, p. 154; *Y. I.*, II, p. 936.
[46] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 14.

of truth. He is capable of sacrificing *ahimsa* for the sake of truth but not the latter for anything whatsoever.[47] "The jewel of non-violence," he writes, "was discovered during the search for and contemplation of truth."[48] His experience convinces him that if he lets go his hold of truth he would never be able to solve the riddle of *ahimsa*.[49] To him truth is the highest law, but *ahimsa* is the highest duty.[50]

Gandhiji considers truth rather than *ahimsa* to be the end, because he believes that truth (*satya*, i.e., essential being) exists beyond and unconditioned by space and time, but *ahimsa* exists only on the part of finite beings.[51] *Ahimsa* divorced from truth would be demoralizing instead of liberating. In Gandhiji's words, "without truth there is no love; without truth it may be affection as for one's country to the injury of others; or infatuation, as of a young man for a girl; or love may be unreasoning and blind, as of ignorant parents for their children."[52] All the same "*Ahimsa* being the means we are naturally more concerned with it in our daily life. It is *ahimsa*, therefore, that our masses have to be educated in. Education in truth follows from it as a natural end."[53]

Like truth, *ahimsa* is also omnipotent, infinite and synonymous with God.[54] It is soul-force or the power of the Godhead within us. Just as the soul can exist independently of the physical body, similarly *ahimsa* also transcends time and space and can act independently of physical aids. It is the greatest and the most active force in the world, more positive than electricity, more powerful than ether, a force superior to all the forces put together, the only force in life.[55]

Like truth, again, it is a matter of faith and experience and not of argument beyond a point. It "is not so much a mental

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47 *H.*, March 28, 1936, p. 49.

48 Gandhiji's foreword to *The Gandhian Way* by J. B. Kripalani.

49 *Autobiography*, II, p. 476.

50 *H.*, March 28, 1936, p. 49.

51 R. B. Gregg's reference to a conversation of his with Gandhiji in his *Power of Non-violence*, p. 276.

52 *Speeches*, p. 503.

53 *H.*, June 23, 1946, p. 199.

54 *H.*, May 1, 1937, p. 89.

55 *H.*, March 14, 1939, p. 39.

or intellectual attitude as a quality of the heart and soul."[56] A living faith in the God of love and in the existence of the soul as apart from the body is, therefore, indispensable for the successful use of non-violence.[57]

Like Plato Gandhiji holds that the universe is governed by *ahimsa* or love, for life persists in the midst of destruction. He writes, "Though there is repulsion enough in Nature, she lives by attraction. Mutual love enables Nature to persist. Man does not live by destruction. Self-love compels regard for others."[58] "We all are bound by the tie of love. There is in everything a centripetal force without which nothing could have existed...even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so must there be in all things animate and the name of that cohesive force among animate beings is love.... Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction."[59]

Ahimsa is thus an all-pervasive eternal principle applicable to every situation in life without any exception. That is why Gandhiji insists, as a condition of complete success of non-violence, that when it is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and must not be applied to isolated acts.[60] For, like Tolstoy, Gandhiji also believes that once we admit violence into *ahimsa* we admit the insufficiency of the latter and thus deny it as the law of moral life. Thus *ahimsa* is the only thing that matters. To Gandhiji it is the Kingdom of Heaven, and if we seek it first, everything else shall be added unto us.[61] He writes, "For me...*Ahimsa* comes before *swaraj*....*Ahimsa* must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible."[62] *Ahimsa* is, according to him, at the root of every one of his activities.

But what is *ahimsa*?

56 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1113.

57 See ch. II *supra*.

58 *Y. I.*, I, p. 284.

59 *Y. I.*, I, p. 734. Gandhiji differs from those Darwinians who swear by a ruthless struggle for existence as the determinant in evolution. But some of the scientists, e.g., Kropotkin, lay stress on mutual aid and hold that progress depends on the preponderance of intra-specific co-operation over intra-specific competition.

60 *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 237.

61 *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 37.

62 *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 174.

The words '*ahimsa*' and 'non-violence' are seemingly negative in form on account of the negative prefixes 'a' and 'non' respectively. Gandhiji suggests the reason why this highest religion has been defined negatively. *Himsa* is an inherent necessity for life in the body. Life lives upon life. *Ahimsa* means an effort to abandon the violence that is inevitable in life.[63] *Ahimsa* stands for the ultimate deliverance of man from the bondage of the flesh so that he may attain the state in which life is possible without the necessity of a perishable body whose sustenance inevitably involves destruction.

According to Gandhiji, the negative aspect of *ahimsa* consists in refraining from causing pain or killing any life out of anger or from selfish purpose or with the intention of injuring it. Thus "*Ahimsa* means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed."[64]

Ahimsa in its negative sense does not mean merely non-killing. Other and more insidious forms of *himsa*, Gandhiji points out, are harsh words and harsh judgments (i.e., those intended to hurt), ill-will, anger, spite, cruelty, the torture of men and animals, the starvation, wanton humiliation and oppression of the weak, the killing of their self-respect, etc.[65] According to Gandhiji, "Exploitation is the essence of violence."[66] Thus *ahimsa* in the negative sense requires that we may not harbour an uncharitable thought even in connection with one who may consider himself our enemy.[67]

He is, however, not a literalist in his conception of *ahimsa*. To him the test of *himsa* is a violent intention behind a thought, word or deed, i.e., an intention to harm.[68] Thus killing is not

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[63] *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 271.

[64] *H.*, Sept. 7, 1935, p. 234.

[65] *Y. I.*, III, p. 860. R. B. Gregg defines violence thus: "Violence is any act, motive, thought, active feeling, or outwardly directed attitude which is divisive in nature or result...; that is to say, inconsistent with spiritual unity....It would include, for example, pride, scorn, contempt, anger, impatience, grumbling, spite, indignation, as well as killing, wounding, frightening, exploiting, deceiving, poisoning, tempting to evil, flattering, deliberate weakening of character and similar wrong." *The Power of Non-violence*, p. 282.

[66] *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 331.

[67] *Speeches*, p. 320.

[68] *H.*, Dec. 19, 1936, p. 362.

himsa when life is destroyed for the sake of those whose life is taken.[69] The destruction of the bodies of tortured creatures helplessly suffering the pangs of a slow, certain death, is *ahimsa*. He writes, "Should my child be attacked by rabies and there was no helpful remedy to relieve his agony I would consider it my duty to take his life."[70] As is well known, he once had a calf in his Ashram poisoned because its intense, unbearable agony was beyond remedy. Similarly, forcibly preventing a child from rushing towards the fire and smacking a child bitten by a snake to keep it awake are instances of non-violence, provided the motive is not anger but the desire to save the child from injury.[71]

Ahimsa is often mistaken for a purely negative doctrine. Such, for example, is the opinion of Bernard Shaw.[72] To Gandhiji *ahimsa* is essentially a positive and dynamic force. In its positive and active aspect non-violence means benevolence or love in more comprehensive than the Pauline sense, for *ahimsa* includes the whole creation and not merely human, though St. Paul's definition is good enough for all practical purposes.[73] *Ahimsa* thus also embraces sub-human life, not excluding plants or flowers, noxious insects or beasts. "Non-violence is therefore in its active form goodwill towards all life."[74] Refraining from *himsa* is only the form of *ahimsa*, love is its very soul. All the same Gandhiji does not identify *ahimsa* with love in order to distinguish this spiritual force from the grosser aspects of the connotation of love. The love that is *ahimsa* is not the mercenary affair which is based on the

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69 *Y. I.*, II, p. 971.

70 *Y. I.*, II, p. 978. Gandhiji lays down four conditions the fulfilment of all of which can warrant the taking of life of an ailing individual from the point of view of *ahimsa*. These are:

(*a*) The disease should be incurable.

(*b*) All concerned should have despaired of the life of the patient.

(*c*) The case should be beyond all help or service.

(*d*) It should be impossible for the patient in question to express his or its wish. (See *Y. I.*, III, p. 897).

71 *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 65-66; *H.*, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 414.

72 Quoted in R. Fullop-Miller, *Gandhi, the Holy Man*, pp. 160-62.

73 *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 39.

74 *Y. I.*, II, p. 286.

goodness of the object of love. It is the true love that is self-effacing and demands no consideration.[75]

This is how Gandhiji defines true love, "True love consists in transferring itself from the body to the dweller within and then necessarily realizing the oneness of all life inhabiting numberless bodies."[76] "The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him.... Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend? Even thieves do that."[77]

Even tigers, snakes and other venomous beasts and reptiles have kinship with us and, being God's creatures like us, have as much right to live as we. True, we do not know what part the many so-called noxious creatures play in the economy of nature. But if we believe God to be good and wise, loving and merciful, He must not have created them for human destruction. Gandhiji believes that our habit of killing fellow-men on the slightest pretext has darkened our reason. We have not yet learnt how to live peacefully with these fellow creatures. Due to ignorance we fear them and destroy them. But we have no right to destroy life that we cannot create, and the fullest development requires the largest love that sheds all fear and reaches out even to these creatures.[78] This, however, does not mean that the satyagrahi should be kind to sub-human life in preference to human life.[79]

Ahimsa thus means the largest love, love even for the evil-doer. It however does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer. On the contrary it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Evil, Gandhiji holds, cannot be overcome by evil, by violence and retaliation. To use violence against the evil-doer is to deny spiritual unity with him. To repeat the mistake of the evil-doer, to fight evil with its own weapons, is like casting out Satan by Satan. It is to descend to the level of the evil-doer, to collaborate with him in propagating evil and thus to move in a vicious circle.

Non-violence, on the other hand, seeks to conquer evil by

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75 *Y. I.*, II, p. 551.
76 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 157.
77 *H.*, March 3, 1946, p. 28.
78 *H.*, Jan. 9, 1937, p. 382; *Y. I.*, II, pp. 957-84.
79 *H.*, June 9, 1946, p. 172.

good. It stands for moral opposition to immorality, the resistance of soul against physical force. It goes to the very root of the problem. It believes in the ultimate possibility, the essential goodness of human nature and thus refuses to accept the evil-doer at his own valuation. The non-violent man seeks patiently, by conscious suffering and the force of love, to convert the evil-doer, i.e., to make him conscious of his spiritual kinship with the victim. "Love does not burn others, it burns itself."[80] The non-violent man continues to suffer till the evil-doer understands his mistake and repents for his misdeeds.

Thus in its positive aspect *ahimsa* implies that subjectively the *ahimsaist* must achieve "as complete self-purification as is humanly possible".[81] He must develop internal strength by waging a victorious conflict against his own feeling of resentment which might otherwise express itself in retaliation and hatred. The strength, which expresses itself in self-discipline and enlightened forgiveness, is not the strength of the body but of the soul and is open to the weakest in body. Objectively the *ahimsaist* must, after this self-conquest, seek to arouse in the evil-doer a sense of justice.

In short, "*ahimsa* consists in allowing others the maximum of convenience at the maximum of inconvenience to us."[82] Again, "every act of injury to a living creature and endorsement of such act by refraining from non-violent effort, whenever possible, to prevent it, is a breach of *ahimsa*."[83]

Absolute *ahimsa* means perfect freedom from *himsa*, i.e., freedom from ill-will, anger and hate rooted in ignorance, and an overflowing, understanding love for all. From the point of view of complete *ahimsa* all violence in whatever form must be eschewed. But such non-violence is a perfect state and is reached only when mind, body and speech are in perfect co-ordination.[84] All *ahimsa* is a power and such absolute *ahimsa* is absolute power. But such absolute *ahimsa* is the attribute of God alone. It is not given to imperfect man to grasp the whole

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80 *Y. I.*, Feb. 2, 1930, p. 60.

81 *H.*, Oct. 12, 1935, p. 276.

82 *Y. I.*, II, p. 984.

83 *Y. I.*, III, p. 812.

84 *Y. I.*, Oct. 1, 1931.

meaning of non-violence or to practise it in full, even as it is not possible for him to know Absolute Truth.

Man has his share of responsibility for violence committed in society. Gandhiji says, "Because underlying *ahimsa* is the unity of all life, the error of one cannot but affect all, and hence man cannot be wholly free from *himsa*. So long as he continues to be a social being he cannot but participate in the *himsa* that the very existence of society involves."[85]

Besides, life is bound in a chain of destruction and *himsa* is an inherent necessity for the life of the body. So no one, while in the flesh, can be entirely free from *himsa*.[86] Thus the very fact of his living, eating, drinking and moving about necessarily involves some destruction of life be it ever so minute. Man has to destroy some life not only for sustaining his own body but also for protecting those under his care.[87] This is, however, inevitable *himsa* and it has been regarded as permissible.

Apart from *himsa* involved in eating, drinking, etc., Gandhiji gives in his writings other instances where *himsa* is unavoidable. Some of these are putting to death rabid dogs and stray dogs when the latter become a menace to society; killing snakes, tigers, etc., in similar cases of emergency; destroying plague-infected rats and fleas, mosquitoes etc.; frightening and violently driving away or even killing monkeys "where they became a menace to the well-being of man"; killing a murderer who is about to kill one's ward if the murderer cannot be prevented otherwise; dealing violently with a madman run amuck, etc. But these are instances of "duty in distress" arising out of human imperfections. They are not exceptions that would disprove the validity of non-violence as the supreme law of life. The greater the man's progress towards perfection, the more would be his knowledge of non-violent ways of dealing with such situations, and the less the need to fall back on violent expedients.

If the votary of *ahimsa* is to remain true to his faith, the inevitable *himsa* that he has to commit must be spontaneous, though not thoughtless, must be the lowest minimum, must be rooted in compassion and must have discrimination, restraint

85 *Autobiography*, II, p. 229.

86 *Y. I.*, II, p. 960; *Autobiography*, II, p. 229.

87 *Y. I.*, II, p. 971; *Diary* I, p. 149.

and detachment at its back.[88] It must be committed after all remedies to avoid it are exhausted.

A reference to both intent and deed is necessary finally to decide whether a particular act or abstention can be classed as *ahimsa*. The intent has to be inferred from a bunch of correlated acts. But though the crucial test of *ahimsa*, it is not the sole test. "To kill any living being or thing save for his or her or its own interest is *himsa*, however noble the motive may otherwise be. And a man who harbours ill-will towards another is no less guilty of *himsa* because for fear of society or want of opportunity he is unable to translate his ill-will into action."[89]

Ahimsa rules out all wanton *himsa* to the sub-human creation, e.g., hunting, vivisection, non-vegetarian diet, etc. Gandhiji considered vegetarianism as one of the priceless gifts of Hinduism and stuck to the principle even in the face of risk to health. Meat-eating, he thinks, clogs our moral and spiritual sensibilities and is unsuited to those who would curb their passions. He does not, however, attach unreasoning importance to food and discourages that narrow attitude which sums up religion in terms of diet.[90] He says, "*Ahimsa* is not a mere matter of dietetics, it transcends it. What a man eats or drinks matters little, it is the self-denial, the self-restraint behind it that matters."[91] Thus cultivation of non-violence is not confined to vegetarians alone.

Similarly non-violence implies that one must engage in occupations that involve the least violence. The occupations that a non-violent man adopts should be fundamentally free from violence and should involve no exploitation of others. Occupations and industries based on body-labour minimize

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[88] *Y. I.*, II, pp. 971 and 983.

Causing pain or killing may be:

(*a*) *ahimsa* when it is the result of calm and clear judgment and the intention is to benefit the victim and relieve his or its agony, rather than to relieve the pain caused to the *ahimsaist* by this agony.

(*b*) permissible *himsa* when it is resorted to for sustaining one's body or protecting one's wards; and

(*c*) *himsa* when life is taken out of anger, selfishness or ill-will.

[89] *Y. I.*, III, p. 883.

[90] *Y. I.*, II, pp. 1184-85.

[91] *Y. I.*, III, p. 821; see also Barr, p. 145.

exploitation and are thus suitable for the satyagrahi. The work of butchers, hunting, war and war preparations are obviously ruled out.[92]

On the whole the freer a man makes himself from *himsa*, the nearer he is to perfect *ahimsa*, i.e., to Absolute Truth or God.

But what is the use, it may be asked, of first exalting non-violence into an eternal principle and then admitting that it is not possible for man to practise it fully in every situation of life? Had we not better admit, as some pacifists do, that in certain hard marginal cases non-violence is inapplicable and violence works better? Gandhiji's answer is that an ideal which can be fully realized must be a poor ideal indeed, for it leaves no scope for constant striving and ceaseless quest which are the basis of all spiritual progress.[93] It is dangerous, therefore, for man to drag down, in his weakness and imperfection, the ideal to the level of what is attainable. "It is much better for me," he insists, "to say I have not sufficient non-violence in me than to admit exceptions to an eternal principle. Moreover, my refusal to admit exceptions spurs me to perfect myself in the technique of non-violence."[94]

If absolute non-violence is not of this world and if each man is left to decide for himself as to what extent he can practise non-violence, the question arises: Where should one draw the line between non-violence and violence? Is the non-violence of the coward also superior to violence?

Gandhiji distinguishes between three levels of non-violence:

The highest of these is what he calls the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness or the non-violence of the brave. It is the non-violence of one who adopts it not by painful necessity but by inner conviction based on moral considerations. This non-violence is not merely political but pervades every sphere of life. It is the non-violence without any mental reservation—the non-violence which does not calculate, which never bends. One adopts non-violence as the law of life, not because it will serve the purpose, but because one has reached that level of moral development at which violence is intolerable. It is such

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92 *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 272.

93 *Y. I.*, III, p. 1940.

94 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

non-violence that moves mountains, transforms life and flinches from nothing in its unshakable faith. Those who accept non-violence as a creed would never surrender their sense of human unity and brotherhood even in the midst of conflict of interests and would ever try to convert and not coerce their adversary.[95]

Next to this is the non-violence adopted as a measure of expediency and sound policy in a certain sphere of life. Gandhiji calls it the non-violence of the weak or the passive non-violence of the helpless; for it is weakness rather than moral conviction which rules out the use of violence. If pursued, not as a cloak for cowardice, but honestly and scrupulously with real courage so long as it is accepted as a policy, it is capable of achieving results to a certain extent.[96] It is, however, not as effective as the thorough-going non-violence of the brave. Being based on expediency rather than on the belief in the infinite moral worth of the least among men, the non-violence of the weak can, when necessary, permit the use of violence, i.e., it can sanction the treatment of men as mere means.

Ahimsa of the first type is difficult to cultivate in groups which may find it hard to rise to the moral excellence necessary for the practice of *ahimsa* as a creed. The Indian National Congress, for example, has been non-violent by expediency.

Gandhiji had always entertained doubts about the efficacy of the non-violence of the weak adopted by India in her struggle for freedom. Thus in 1931 he wrote "Policy is essentially a temporary expedient which one might alter as circumstances altered. It is easy enough to follow truth and non-violence so long as no suffering was involved. . . ."[97]

Towards the close of his life he was disillusioned by outbursts of communal violence. He saw that India's struggle was based not on non-violence but on passive resistance which was essentially a weapon of the weak and which changed into armed resistance whenever possible. He realized that "There was no such thing as non-violence of the weak. Non-violence and weakness was a contradiction in terms."[98] With the burden of subjection lifted, the attitude of violence which is an essential

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[95] *H.*, Aug. 31, 1947, p. 302.
[96] *Y. I.*, I, p. 265.
[97] *Y. I.*, March 26, 1931, p. 49.
[98] *H.*, July 27, 1947, p. 253.

characteristic of the non-violence of the weak, made people fly at each other's throats when the question of the distribution of power came up.[99]

Non-violence as a policy can be efficacious only if people pursue it courageously and grow out of it into the non-violence of the brave.

Non-violence presupposes the ability, though not the willingness, to strike. In fact Gandhiji lays down, as an axiom of non-violence, the principle that "man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence." But the real strength behind such ability comes from fearlessness and an indomitable will and not from mere physical capacity.[100] Thus non-violence is the quality of the brave and strong and is impossible without fearlessness.[101]

The third type is the non-violence so called by mistake, the passive non-violence of the coward and the effiminate. Fear and love are contradictory terms. And so "cowardice and *ahimsa* do not go together any more than water and fire."[102] Cowardice flees from danger instead of facing it and is unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable. "Cowardice is impotence worse than violence. The coward desires revenge but being afraid to die, he looks to others, maybe the Government of the day, to do the work of defence for him. A coward is less than man. He does not deserve to be a member of a society of men and women."[103]

When there is a choice between cowardice and violence, Gandhiji would advise violence. To him vengeance is any day superior to passive, effiminate and helpless submission. ". . . It is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence."[104] The coward has no faith in God and offends against truth when he feigns non-violence. On the other hand the violent man is courageous and true to his feelings. So "There is hope for

[99] *H.*, Aug. 31, 1947, p. 302.

[100] *Speeches*, p. 790; *Hind Swaraj*, p. 40; *Y. I.*, I, p. 260.

[101] *Y. I.*, II, p. 1113.

[102] *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 331.

[103] *H.*, Sept., 15, 1946, p. 312.

[104] *H.*, Oct. 21, 1939, p. 310.

a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. I have therefore said more than once that if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by force of suffering, i.e., by non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting."[105]

"Non-violence cannot be taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance. . . . Before he can understand non-violence he has to be taught to stand his ground and even suffer death, in the attempt to defend himself against the aggressor who bids fair to overwhelm him. To do otherwise would be to confirm his cowardice and take him further away from non-violence. Whilst I may not actually help any one to retaliate, I must not let a coward seek shelter behind non-violence so called."[106]

Ahimsa, being infinitely superior to violence, requires a higher kind of courage than does violence, the courage of dying without killing. To him also who has not this courage Gandhiji advises killing and being killed rather than shamefully fleeing from danger in the name of non-violence.

The world often mistakes violence for real strength and considers it indispensable for overcoming evil. This is partly due to the fact that non-violence being natural is not noted, while violence being an interruption of the course of nature is striking and is noticed. Quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of the force of love and nobody takes note of it. But if two brothers fall out and take up arms or go to law, which, according to Gandhiji, is another form of the exhibition of brute force, their doings will be immediately noticed in the Press, they would be the talk of their neighbours, and would probably go down to history.[107]

Besides, the non-violent man depends on soul-force and has no outward weapon. Not only his speech but also his actions seem ineffective. On the other hand violence is a crude force and has its visible weapons and visible effect. The world is deceived by appearance and is hypnotized by violence.

In reality non-violence is by far the most active force in the world. It is self-acting and does not need physical force for its

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105 *Y. I.*, III, pp. 222-23.

106 *H.*, July 20, 1935, p. 180.

107 *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 68-69.

propagation.[108] Brute force is nothing as compared to it. Gandhiji compares the working of the two forces thus: "A man who wields sanguinary weapons and is intent upon destroying those whom he considers his enemies, does at least require some rest and has to lay down his arms for a while in every twenty-four hours. . . .Not so the votary of truth and non-violence, for the simple reason that they are not external weapons. They reside in the human breast and they are actively working their way whether you are awake or whether you are asleep; . . .The panoplied warrior of truth and non-violence is ever and incessantly active."[109]

Again, soul-force affects the adversary unconsciously and the unconscious effect is far greater than the conscious effect. To quote Gandhiji, "It (non-violence) is direct, ceaseless, but three-fourths invisible and only one-fourth visible. In its visibility it seems to be ineffective. . .but it is really intensely active and most effective in ultimate result. . . .A violent man's activity is most visible, while it lasts but it is always transitory. . . .Non-violence is the most invisible and the most effective."[110]

So strong is the force of love, a force open to the weakest in body, that unaided it can defy the whole world in arms against it. It is this force in a frail mother that tames the brute and the bully in the erring, defiant, strong-bodied son. This love force is universal in its application.[111] Indeed, love works even in relation to animals. We have cases on record where men whose fearless love travelled beyond their kind, approached tigers, lions, snakes, etc. as friends without being harmed.

Thus non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind, mightier than the mightiest weapon devised by the ingenuity of man.

"There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat." For "Hatred ever kills, love never dies. . . .What is obtained by love is retained for all time. What is obtained by hatred becomes a burden in reality, for it increases hatred." Further, being soul-force "Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e., the power at the

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[108] *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 327.

[109] *Y. I.*, Dec. 21, 1931.

[110] *H.*, March 20, 1937, pp. 41-42.

[111] *Y. I.*, II, p. 868.

disposal of the non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent."[112] Besides, "There is no time limit for the satyagrahi, nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering....The so-called defeat may be the dawn of victory. It may be the agony of birth....The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice."[113] Again, "Non-violence has no limits. If a particular dose does not seem to answer, more should be administered. It is a never-failing remedy."[114]

Non-violence, however, is not a cloistered virtue confined to the hermit and the cave-dweller. Being soul-force, it is capable of being practised equally by all, children, young men and women, and grown-up people, by individuals as well as groups. Even the masses can practise non-violence, "not with full knowledge of its implications, but because it is the law of our species."[115]

Truth and non-violence are no new ideals. They are eternal laws of life preached in various countries for thousands of years. But these ideals lacked that vitality, fullness of meaning and universality of application which they possess today. They had come to be regarded as cloistered virtues, the almost exclusive preserve of the ascetic or else a mere mask for the weak and the coward. They were conceded as correct ideals but dismissed as being impracticable in the rough and tumble of life. Uncompromising truth, it was held, has no place in trade and commerce, in professions like law and specially in politics. Similarly non-violence too was seldom regarded, even after the ministries of the Buddha and the Christ, as an adequate method of resolving all kinds of conflicts and of organizing society and regulating individual and group relations. Its use was confined mostly to isolated individuals and small groups.

Gandhiji has restated and reinterpreted these fundamental laws in terms of modern life. He has experimented with them on a larger scale than any one else and applied them in his original way practically to every aspect of life. For applying them

[112] *H.*, Dec. 12, 1935, p. 276.
[113] *Y. I.*, II, p. 846.
[114] *H.*, Aug. 20, 1938, p. 226.
[115] *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 331.

he has also created suitable organizations and has trained experts. He has preached and demonstrated that these ideals are for all humanity to be practised in every situation of life. He has also demonstrated to a sceptical world that truth and non-violence are the mightiest weapons in the hands of man, the inexhaustible source of power. Thus he has enriched the content of these ideals and breathed new life into them.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES (*contd.*)— THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SATYAGRAHI LEADER

Truth is the end and non-violence the way.

Non-violence is selfless, suffering love which is impossible without purity of mind and body. So the satyagrahi must equip himself by undergoing the purificatory discipline. *Brahmacharya* is the most important of the vows which Gandhiji prescribes as being essential for the development of non-violence. He regards this vow as important as Truth itself and is convinced that a leader of satyagraha must attempt and virtually achieve *brahmacharya*.[1]

In common parlance *brahmacharya* means control over sex-function. Gandhiji, however, takes this virtue in its most comprehensive sense. Etymologically *brahmacharya* means the discipline which leads to the realization of *Brahman*. "The living force which we call God can be found if we know and follow His law leading to the discovery of Him in us. . . . The law may, in one word, be termed *brahmacharya*." So Gandhiji defines *brahmacharya* as "that correct way which leads to *Brahman*".[2] *Brahmacharya* consists in the fullest control over all the senses in thought, word and deed. An impure thought or anger is a breach of *brahmacharya*.[3] Thus *brahmacharya* means self-control in all directions.

Brahmacharya is, according to Gandhiji, a mental condition.

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[1] *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192; Gandhiji's letter published in *Sarvodaya* (Hindi), Oct. 1938, p. 35.

[2] *H.*, June 22, 1947, p. 200.

[3] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 23; *Autobiography*, I, pp. 485-89; *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.

The outward behaviour of a man is the sign of the inner state. But "*brahmacharya* is not a virtue that can be cultivated by outward restraints." The vow demands the capacity to keep pure even amidst the so-called temptations rather than abstaining from the other sex as being destructive of discipline. "The discipline which can be observed only by abstaining from companionship which is natural and is rooted in service is neither discipline nor *brahmacharya*. It is renunciation without non-attachment." The real aids to *brahmacharya* are the rest of the non-violent vows and not mere outward restraints, which unlike the former, are not an integral part of *brahmacharya* and are temporary.[4]

In his views on *brahmacharya* Gandhiji rejects the traditional belief that women being more worldly are morally inferior to men and that one seeking to attain *brahmacharya* should avoid contact with them. According to him, it is not woman whose touch defiles man, but he is himself often too impure to touch her. He believes in the equality of the two sexes and holds that woman, being mother, excels man in her capacity for suffering. A satyagrahi observing *brahmacharya* shuns neither man nor woman. Observance of this vow sublimates his sexual energy, burns up his sexual desire and enables him to rise above the consciousness of sex so that all women become mothers, sisters and daughters to him. In 1938 he was not definite as to the limitations a *brahmachari* should put upon himself regarding his contacts with women. Towards the close of his life he felt that a *brahmachari* may, if occasion demands, even share his bed with a woman out of a sense of duty.[5] His resplendent purity will communicate itself to her, strengthen her moral fibre and help her to attain sexlessness.

Sometime before his death Gandhiji's quest for perfection led him to experiments in this direction.[5] Some of his colleagues expressed serious misgivings about these experiments which being unconventional might slacken the established tradition and unsettle popular notions of moral rectitude. Gandhiji was, however, convinced that he should pursue his *sadhana* on the lonesome way of truth and continue to explore the law of continence undeterred by this disapproval. Any other course would

[4] *H.*, June 15, 1947, p. 192 and *Diary* I, p. 108.
[5] For details see Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, I, Ch. 23.

be jettisoning truth and non-violence. But for his assassination he would have shared the results of his experiments with the public.

Strictly speaking, *brahmacharya* rules out marriage, for the latter is not essential for self-realization. "Marriage is a 'fall' even as birth is a 'fall'."[6]

Gandhiji is conscious that absolute *brahmacharya* is the ideal state that imperfect man cannot fully realize. All the same the ideal after which we strive must be the correct ideal even as children are shown perfect shapes of letters and required to reproduce them as best they can.[7] Gandhiji is, however, a practical idealist and draws a line between self-control and sublimation on the one hand and mere repression on the other, and without lowering the ideal he suggests gradual self-control to people of different moral grades.

Thus if progeny is wanted—and this is a natural desire—marriage is essential. But marriage should be an instrument of discipline and sublimation and not indulgence. "The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as stepping stone to divine or universal love."[8] The fundamental law of the married state is that the sex act is justified only if it is confined to the sole purpose of procreation. But divorced from this deliberate purpose it is "a typical and gross form of dissipation and has therefore been specially and rightly chosen for condemnation."[9] So confined the urge is a fine and noble thing and nothing to be ashamed of.[10] Gandhiji endorses the view of the Hindu *smritis* that married people who observe this fundamental law should be regarded as *brahmacharis*.[11] He calls it the ideal of married *brahmacharya* and, following the *Manusmriti*, considers one child as *dharmaja*, born of righteousness, others being *kamaja*, born of lust.

He is alive to the weakness and difficulties of the young and warns us against hypocrisy and mere outward suppression.

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[6] *Speeches*, p. 829.
[7] Mahatma Gandhi, *Self-Restraint v. Self-Indulgence*, I, p. 75.
[8] *Y. I.*, May 21, 1931, p. 115.
[9] *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.
[10] *H.*, March 28, 1936, p. 53; and April 25, 1936, p. 84.
[11] *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 36.

ideas, his social and political theories, his views on education and his economic outlook.

In his views on culture the concept of *swadeshi* finds expression in Gandhiji's meticulous attachment to the rural civilization of India due to its unerring perception of spiritual and non-violent values. Gandhiji is not an indiscriminate despiser of everything Western,[84] but he condemns in no uncertain terms the materialism and violence of modern civilization. He distrusts it because he thinks that in its race after power and pleasure it neglects the soul and its perfection. The tremendous development of the art of destruction and the horrors of industrialism—greed, competition and exploitation, war and imperialism—these hinder moral development and result in "spiritual hardening". To him modern civilization is "ephemeral" and "a civilization only in name".[85]

His metaphysical and ethical ideas are firmly rooted in the philosophical tradition of India. He has reinterpreted ancient Indian ideals and applied them to conditions of modern life.

The principle of *swadeshi* again explains his attitude towards religion. "As for religion,...I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion...that is, the use of immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective I should serve it by purging it of its defects."[86]

In the social and political spheres he believes in making use of indigenous institutions and curing them of their proved defects. Thus most of his non-violent weapons, non-co-operation, civil disobedience, fasting, picketing, etc. are the refined, modernized forms of ancient Indian modes of political and social protest. In the social sphere he upholds the *varnashramadharma*, though not the caste-system as it exists today.

In the sphere of education, ever since his South African days he had been insisting that education must be in keeping with national traditions and be imparted through the mother tongue.

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84 "....I am humble enough to admit, that there is much that we can profitably assimilate from the West. Wisdom is no monopoly of one continent or one race. My resistance to the Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation...." *Y.I.*, III, p. 286.

85 *Hind Swaraj*, Chapters VI & XIII.

86 *Speeches*, pp. 273-74.

In the economic sphere Gandhiji stands for the self-sufficiency of the country and even of villages except for such foreign things as are needed for the growth of the people.[87] To quote him, "The broad definition of *swadeshi* is the use of all home-made articles to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for the protection of home industries, more specially those industries without which India will become pauperized."[88] "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly, and a negation of the *swadeshi* spirit."[89]

Thus he is not against all international trade, though he holds that imports should be limited to things which are necessary for our growth but which India cannot herself produce and exports to things of real benefit to foreigners.[90]

Swadeshi demands the exclusion of all foreign cloth. India can, as she once did, manufacture all the cloth of her requirement. Besides, in an agricultural country like India *khadi* is a universal subsidiary industry on which the semi-starved and semi-employed peasants can depend to eke out their scanty income. Besides, *khadi* is the symbol of decentralized economy. This is why Gandhiji considers *khadi* "a necessary and the most important corollary of the principle of *swadeshi*" and "the first indispensable step towards the discharge of *swadeshi dharma* towards society."[91] He observed in 1947, "Immediately after my return to India in 1915 I discovered that the centre of *swadeshi* lay in *khadi*. If *khadi* goes, I contended even then, there is no

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87 Gandhiji's views on this aspect of *swadeshi* seem to have undergone an evolution. A study of his famous address on *swadeshi* delivered at the Missionary Conference, Madras (1916), shows that he then stood for complete self-sufficiency of the country and its economic isolation from the rest of the world. Referring to India's external trade he said, "If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she should be today a land flowing with milk and honey...she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirement within her own borders." *Speeches*, p. 278.

88 *Y. I.*, II, p. 797.

89 *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 96-97.

90 *Y. I.*, II, p. 797.

91 *Y. I.*, June 18, 1931.

swadeshi. . .the manufactures in Indian mills do not constitute *swadeshi*. To that belief I cling even today."[92] But the economic aspect of *swadeshi* does not end but begins with *khadi*. *Swadeshi* implies a comprehensive preference of local manufacture and the boycott of all foreign cloth and articles which can be manufactured in one's own country, though not of all foreign goods.

India's adoption of *swadeshi* through *khadi* does not mean harming the British and other foreign mill-owners. They have sinned in destroying India's principal supplementary industry, upsetting her economic system and bringing poverty and starvation to her doors. The foreigners concerned would be the gainers in so far as they would be free from this vice.[92a]

Until 1931 Gandhiji distinguished between the economic aspect of *swadeshi* and the economic boycott of foreign goods. *Swadeshi* is a spiritual discipline, an invigorating and purifying process and a constructive programme. On the other hand, until 1931 he considered the economic boycott of foreign goods as a temporary punitive measure, a political weapon of expediency which works as undue influence exerted to secure one's purpose. It is resorted to, he held, in order to compel the opponent country by deliberately inflicting a loss on them and the spirit of punishment is a sign of weakness and a form of violence.[93]

In the satyagraha movement of 1931-33, however, Gandhiji acquiesced in the Congress vigorously undertaking the boycott of British goods.[94] Later on, in an interview with a Chinese, he favoured the economic boycott of the aggressor nation.[95] He seems to have come to believe that economic boycott need not be vindictive and violent and that it can be used as a legitimate non-violent, non-coercive means of non-co-operation.[96]

Gandhiji also recommends the vow regarding the removal of untouchability which follows from the principle of spiritual unity of all life. We are all sparks of the same fire, the children

[92] *H.*, June 29, 1947, p. 211.
[92a] *Y. I.*, June 18, 1931.
[93] *Y. I.*, I, pp. 147 and 487-88.
[94] See Ch. IX *infra*.
[95] See Ch. XI *infra*.
[96] See Ch. IX *infra*.

of the same God. He, therefore, asks of every one to break down the barriers between man and man and between the various orders of being and to serve all life as one's own self.[97] To him the removal of untouchability is a bigger problem than that of gaining Indian independence.[98] It is "an issue of transcendental value, far surpassing *swaraj* in terms of political constitutions". Such a constitution would be a dead-weight if it was not backed by a moral basis in the shape of removal of untouchability.[99]

Gandhiji's views about social relations are based on the law of *varna* which he calls true socialism and which was intimately connected with non-violence.[100] By *varnashramadharma*, however, he does not mean the present-day hideous distortion of the original *varnas* into countless castes with gradations of high and low and rigid restrictions on marital and social relations. He is convinced that the caste system and these restrictions ought to go if untouchability is to be eradicated and that with the removal of untouchability the caste system will be purified and will resolve itself into the true *varnadharma*.[101] *Varna* in its real meaning, Gandhiji thinks, is extinct today. In its ideal sense *varna* is not only for Hindus but for the whole humanity. "It is natural to man in his regenerate state."[102] Gandhiji defines the law of *varna* thus: "The law of *varna* means that every one shall follow as a matter of *dharma*—duty—the hereditary calling of his forefathers in so far as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics. He will earn his livelihood by following that calling. He may not hoard riches, but devote the balance for the good of the people."[103] Gandhiji lays stress on functions being hereditary, because heredity is a law of nature. But he is not for exclusive, watertight divisions. Thus *varna* is intimately, but not indissolubly, connected with birth. "*Varna* is determined by birth, but can be retained only by observing its

97 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 44.

98 *H.*, Jan. 29, 1950, p. 412.

99 *H.*, Feb. 11, 1933.

100 See pp. 8-9 above.

101 *H.*, Feb. 11, 1933, and July 28, 1946, pp. 233-34.

102 *Conversations*, p. 61.

103 *H.*, Sept. 28, 1934, pp. 260-61.

obligations. One born of *brahmana* parents will be called a *brahmana*, but if his life fails to reveal the attributes of a *brahmana* when he comes of age, he cannot be called a *brahmana*. He will have fallen from Brahmanhood. On the other hand, one who is born not a *brahmana* but reveals in his conduct the attributes of a *brahmana* will be regarded as a *brahmana*, though he will himself disclaim the label."[103a] Gandhiji explains why *varna* restricts man, for the purpose of holding body and soul together, to the occupation of his forefathers, "*Varnashramadharma* defines man's mission on this earth. He is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker."[104] The fulfilment of the law which correlates calling to aptitude should be spontaneous and no matter of honour or shame. The law would mean equality of all callings and professions, all property being held in trust for the community.[105] The law of *varna* rules out untouchability.

Gandhiji is undoubtedly concerned with untouchability as it exists in India, but the principle is of wider application; for we find similar barriers erected everywhere in the world. The ill-treatment of Negroes, coloured races, primitive tribes, etc. is the symptom of the same disease, the denial of equality of all men irrespective of colour, creed, race or calling.

Gandhiji believes not only in the equality of men but also in the equality of the principal religions of the world. Equality of religions follows from the fact that truth as known to man is always relative and never absolute.

Even as soul is manifested in many bodies, so there is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many as it passes through the human medium. He wrote in 1934, "I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. . . they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another."[106] According to him each one of the religions embodies a

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[103a] *H.*, Sept. 28, 1934, pp. 260-61.

[104] *Y. I.*, III, pp. 426-27.

[105] *H.*, Sept. 28, 1934, p. 260-64.

[106] *H.*, Feb. 16, 1934, p. 6.

common motivating force: the desire to uplift man's life and give it purpose. Men being imperfect, all religions are also imperfect revelations of truth and liable to error. Thus there is no religion that is absolutely perfect. All are equally imperfect or more or less perfect.[107] The imperfections of religions are expressed in beliefs and practices rooted in tradition but unsupportable by reason. The question of the comparative merit of religions does not arise. A satyagrahi should, therefore, honour and study all religions. This reverential study will help him to grasp the basic unity of all religions and to cultivate "equimindedness" towards them. He should be alive to defects of his faith. But as all religions are defective he must not leave his own. On the other hand, he should try to remove its defects, adopting into it acceptable features of other faiths.[108] Acceptance of equality of religions necessarily prevents proselytizing.[109] The satyagrahi should not have even a secret wish in his mind that other people should be converted to his faith. Equal respect for religions, however, does not mean toleration of irreligion or being blind to the faults of other faiths.[110]

Humility is also essential for a satyagrahi or a seeker after truth. "The existence of the body is possible only by reason of the ego. The complete annihilation of the body is salvation (or self-realization). He who has completely destroyed the 'ego' becomes an embodiment of Truth."[111] It is, however, not an observance by itself, for it cannot be directly cultivated. "To cultivate humility is tantamount to cultivating hypocrisy."[112] If we are devoted to truth and fill our life with service, humility will come of itself.

Humility is a sense of moral and spiritual proportion whereby all men are related to the infinite and eternal God and thus

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107 *H.*, March 6, 1937, pp. 25-26.

108 He does not object to any one electing his own faith, but he is opposed to any organized attempt to impose one's religion on others. All the same he is against putting any legal hindrance in the way of anybody preaching for the acceptance of his religion. *H.*, Jan. 13, 1940, p. 413.

109 Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 4.

110 *Yeravda Mandir*, Ch. X; *H.*, Sept. 28, 1935, pp. 260-61; Barr, p. 75.

111 *H.*, Nov. 27, 1949, p. 340.

112 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 67.

assume their true place and relative position.[113] It is the consciousness of spiritual unity and equality of all men, indeed of all life.[114] It rules out lust of power and position and makes the possessor realize that he is as nothing. Gandhiji writes, "I must reduce myself to zero. So long as one does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures there is no salvation for him."[115] A humble person is not himself conscious of his humility. Humility steers clear of the complex of superiority as well as of inferiority, for both of these are signs of separateness and not unity. Nor does true humility mean inertia. "True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed to the service of humanity."[116]

Humility is indispensable for a satyagrahi because to be lacking in humility is to separate oneself from the Universal Soul and to court weakness. Obviously such a person cannot properly practise the non-violent values. He is not non-violent, for he does not have equal regard for all. His egotism is a denial of the truth that all creatures are mere atoms in this universe. It is too much to expect of a person who is not humble to admit his mistakes. Nor can complete dependence on God, so essential for a satyagrahi, be possible for a person who feels that he is something.

Unobtrusive humility is an asset of inestimable value to the satyagrahi leader during the course of non-violent resistance. He does not indulge in brag, bluff and bluster, but lets his work speak for itself and relies for strength on the correctness of his position. This wins supporters, converts the wavering and disarms the opponent. Humility is, in such a campaign, a key to sure success.

This is the ethical discipline that a satyagrahi must undergo. The discipline involves the control and sublimation of divisive appetites and emotions, particularly those of sex, acquisitiveness, pugnacity, fear and hatred. The discipline is, in the words

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113 An article on "The Personality of Mahatma Gandhi" by R. B. Gregg in the *Indian Review*, Feb. 1934, p. 84.

114 R. B. Gregg calls humility "a sort of spiritual equalitarianism". (*The Power of Non-violence*, p. 258).

115 *Autobiography*, II, p. 593.

116 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 69.

of Mr. Andrews, "a singular blending of different inward acts of conscience which issue in outward acts of observance."[117] Gandhiji insists on mind, body and speech being in proper co-ordination, for "the mere outward observance will be simply a mask harmful both to the man himself and others."[118] The various observances being derived from truth are inter-related, and we cannot disregard any of them without hurting the rest. "...all the disciplines are of equal importance. If one is broken all are....It is essential that all the disciplines should be taken as one."[119] Thus they are an essential part of satyagraha itself. Though every one has within him the divine spark and the potentiality to acquire this discipline, Gandhiji considers such discipline essential for the leaders only who seek to evolve truth by their own effort. But, "Mere discipline cannot make for leadership. The latter calls for faith and vision."[120]

Discipline, of course, is expected even of a common volunteer, but not the high level of moral excellence required of the leader.[121] In his earlier non-violent movements Gandhiji's emphasis, so far as the satyagrahi followers were concerned, was on external acts of observance and not so much on motive. Thus he wrote in 1921, "I confess that the motive of all non-co-operators is not love but a meaningless hatred....I call it meaningless for the hatred of non-co-operators has no meaning in the plan of non-co-operation. A man does not sacrifice himself out of hatred...what does it matter with what motive a man does the right thing?"[122] Even later on he continued to lay great stress on external observances specially spinning which he considered the test of non-violent discipline and the symbol of identification with the poorest. But he insisted that in regard to non-violence mere physical observance was not enough and that even the masses must not harbour ill-will or anger against the opponent.[123] It does not matter if the belief of the masses in

117 C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 111.

118 *Y. I.*, Oct. 1, 1931, p. 287.

119 *H.*, June 8, 1947, p. 180.

120 *H.*, July 28, 1940, p. 227.

121 *Y. I.*, I, pp. 34-36.

122 *Ibid.*, pp. 253-54.

123 See, for example, his article entitled "Causes" in *Harijan*, Oct. 28, 1939.

non-violence is unintelligent. Their faith in the leaders must be genuine. The belief of the leaders in non-violence must be intelligent and they must try to live up to all the implications of the belief.[124]

But is this discipline practicable? Does not Gandhiji expect too much of human nature? Besides, is it the correct ideal? Will it really lead to the greatest good of all? And even if the ideal is sound, how to apply abstract principles to concrete situations of life? We propose to deal with these questions in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER V

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PRACTICABILITY OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

All political theories have a psychological basis, and the validity of Gandhiji's political philosophy depends partly on his insight into the real nature of man.

His critics often point out that his philosophy expects the impossible from human nature. Instead of taking a realistic view, they say, he glorifies human nature and takes a very optimistic and roseate view of man and of his ability to achieve the good.[1]

On the other hand, Gandhiji's claim is that he is not a visionary but a practical idealist and that he is "a fairly accurate student of human nature", having studied it in all its shades and casts.[2] His long experience as a satyagrahi leader, his intensive tours of India, his contact with large masses of men, the intimate correspondence that he kept on for more than half a century with a large number of men and women in India and outside—all these gave him a profound grasp of psychology.

Gandhiji's views about human nature are bound up indissolubly with his metaphysical and moral principles. He takes into account not only man's physical behaviour but also his real

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[124] *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 332.

[1] S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 191; M. Ruthnaswamy, *The Political Philosophy of Mr. Gandhi*, p. 16.

[2] *Y. I.*, I, p. 635; *H.*, Feb. 2, 1934, p. 16; *Autobiography*, II, p. 77.

nature, his true self, the spiritual element in him. He is not only concerned with human nature as it is, he also tells us how man can train and mould his nature so as to become what he is capable of becoming.

Gandhiji does not believe that man is all good, an angel, at the beginning of his life. "Every one of us is a mixture of good and evil. Is there not plenty of evil in us? There is enough of it in me. . .and I always pray to God to purge me of it. The difference that there is between human beings is the difference of degree."[3]

He admits man's animal ancestry. "We were, perhaps, all originally brutes. I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute."[4] Again, "Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward, but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb . . .the downward instinct is embodied in them (men). . ."[5]

Even the tallest trees do not touch heaven, and Gandhiji believes that even the greatest of men, so long as they are within the frame of the flesh, have their imperfections. "There is no one without faults, not even men of God. They are men of God not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults. . .and are ever ready to correct themselves."[6] As for himself he had been loud and frequent in admitting the weaknesses which sometimes assailed him in subtle form. In his characteristic, humble strain he writes, "I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and am, therefore, as liable to err as any."[7]

Social psychology has made us familiar with the idea that as a member of a group man sometimes behaves worse than when alone. With a sense of security and power which the numerical strength of his companions may give him, he loses his sense of responsibility, yields to the emotional appeal of the group and participates in activities which he would normally

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[3] *H.*, June 10, 1939, pp. 158-59.
[4] *H.*, April 2, 1938, p. 65.
[5] *H.*, Feb. 1, 1935, p. 410.
[6] *H.*, Jan. 28, 1939, p. 446.
[7] *Y. I.*, I, p. 996.

avoid. Gandhiji also places greater reliance on individuals than on groups.[8] The individual can be more amenable to reason and more alive to moral considerations than the group. Thus a satyagrahi group may not be as non-violent and truthful as individual satyagrahis, because the emphasis in group action tends to shift from inner purity to external conformity, and this tells on the potency of soul-force. That is one of the reasons why in 1933 when Gandhiji suspended mass civil disobedience he still permitted individual civil disobedience. In the satyagraha movement of 1940-41 also he avoided mass civil disobedience and confined himself to individual civil disobedience on a large scale. Gandhiji does not distrust groups. "My faith in the people is boundless. Theirs is an amazingly responsive nature. Let not the leaders distrust...the people's ability to control themselves." "...nothing is so easy as to train mobs for the simple reason that they have no mind, no premeditation."[9] Given sincere, intelligent workers, masses could be trained to practise mass satyagraha. But he lays great stress on the need of faith in non-violence, adequate discipline and efficient leadership.

Though he is duly conscious of the weakness of man as an individual and as a member of a group, he does not look upon man as a mere brute, naturally depraved. Sins and errors and abuse of freedom are not man's true self. Man is above all the soul, and so Gandhiji has unshakable faith in human nature. Even the most brutal of men cannot disown the spiritual element in them, that is, their potentiality for goodness. What distinguishes man from the brute creation is the self-conscious impulse to realize the divinity inherent in him. To quote Gandhiji, "We were born with brute strength, but we were born in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation."[10] "Man as animal is violent, but as spirit (he) is non-violent. The moment he awakens to the spirit within he cannot remain violent."[11]

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[8] *Y.I.*, I, p. 635.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

[10] *H.*, April 2, 1938, p. 65.

[11] *H.*, Aug. 11, 1940, p. 245.

We have discussed in the second chapter Gandhiji's views on the nature of the soul and its limitless potentialities for progress. These views lead to some of his important conclusions about human nature. Thus he believes in the godliness, the inherent goodness of human nature. Godliness implies that it is more natural for man to be good than to be evil, though apparently descent may seem easier than ascent.[12] It is his firm faith that man is by nature going higher.[13] That in mankind moral qualities and social virtues, love, co-operation and the like, preponderate over violence, selfishness, etc. is proved by the fact that life exists amidst destruction. "I believe that the sum total of the energy of mankind is not to bring us down but to lift us up, and that is the result of the definite, if unconscious, working of the law of love."[14] "...the humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that (spiritual) identity."[15] In an article written in 1940 he pointed out that the changes in the social life of man from cannibalism to civilized stable life of agriculture are signs of progressive *ahimsa* and diminishing *himsa*. Mankind has not only steadily progressed towards *ahimsa* but it has also to progress towards it still further. "Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression."[16]

Gandhiji also believes that human nature is in its essence one and that every man has the capacity for the highest possible development. To quote him, "The soul is one in all. Its possibilities are therefore the same for every one."[17] "The ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. I have arrived at them by gradual evolution....I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith."[18] "And I claim that what I practise is capable of being practised by all, because I am a very

[12] *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64; May 16, 1936, p. 109; and Sept. 7, 1935, p. 234.
[13] *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 254.
[14] *Y.I.*, Nov. 12, 1931, p. 355.
[15] *Gandhiji's Correspondence with Government*, p. 82.
[16] *H.*, Aug. 11, 1940, p. 245.
[17] *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 254.
[18] *Y.I.*, II, p. 204.

ordinary mortal open to the same temptations and liable to the same weaknesses as the least among us."[19] Again, "I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested the truth by experience, that primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation."[20] Gandhiji's belief is supported by the opinion of modern psychologists that human nature is not rigidly fixed and that human behaviour has undergone and is capable of undergoing immense changes.

He considers in detail human nature as it should be, i.e., the cardinal virtues which a man should develop in order to integrate his personality. This is the ethical discipline which we have discussed in the third and the fourth chapters. The discipline means the control of our lower nature, especially the appetites of sex, acquisitiveness and pugnacity and emotions of fear and hatred. Positively it consists in the pursuit of truth through love of all, that is, service of all. Thus developing conscious non-violence is the path to perfection.

But though Gandhiji's ideal is not a psychological impossibility, is it practicable? Is it not too exacting to demand of man the conduct of the highest ethical standard? Will the ideal appeal to the common run of humanity? Besides, can it be fully realized?

His ideal is no mere logical abstraction or academic theory. He is a man of action who never thinks of theories except in terms of practice. He never teaches anything that he has himself not practised. He emphatically denies the charge that he is a mere visionary. He insists that his ideal is not for the chosen few but for the whole humanity to be practised in every aspect of daily life.

He does not expect the complete realization of the ideal. He believes in the perfectibility, not the perfection, of human nature. Man, so long as he is in the flesh, can, at the most, approach the ideal, he can never fully realize it. "Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but should never cease to strive for it."[21] ". . . between the ideal and practice

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19 *Y. I.*, III, p. 517.

20 *H.*, May 16, 1936, p. 109.

21 *Speeches*, p. 301.

there must always be an unbridgeable gulf. The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it."[22]

To him an ideal state is a perfect state, and "being necessarily limited by the bonds of the flesh, we can attain perfection only after the dissolution of the body."[23] Besides, "where would be room for that constant striving, that ceaseless quest after the ideal that is the basis of all spiritual progress, if mortals could reach the perfect state while still in the body?"[24] This is why Gandhiji emphasizes the means rather than the end, effort rather than its fulfilment. He believes in ceaseless striving.

Gandhiji also realizes how strenuous is the mental struggle, how intense the suffering involved in controlling and changing one's nature, in erasing the almost indelible impressions with which one is born. He says "...it is not easy for all, at least for me, to efface the old *samskaras*."[25] He knows it is an uphill task, a difficult process to conquer evil in one's own life and to become truthful and non-violent. "It takes a fairly strenuous course of training to attain to a mental state of non-violence."[26] Thus in a conversation with Dr. Thurman in 1936 Gandhiji remarked, "The expression (of non-violence) in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities. If for mastering the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes? For if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent."[27]

The task has been rendered specially difficult by the moral confusion created by modern civilization and its emphasis on wrong values, on physical pleasures, acquisitiveness, competition, and other self-regarding propensities.

He is duly conscious that his ethical discipline is a difficult ideal and .that the lure of material advancement and the

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22 *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 303.
23 *H.*, April 17, 1937, p. 87.
24 *Y. I.*, III, p. 940.
25 *Autobiography*, II, p. 80; *Y. I.*, II, p. 1204.
26 *Y. I.*, Oct. 1, 1931, p. 287.
27 *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 39.

tantalizing pleasures of the senses will, in the case of many, make it difficult to undergo the discipline. So he does not expect everybody to act on the ideal all at once. All the same he is not a pessimist. He asks us not to take fright or give up the effort in despair or degrade and cheapen the ideal and thus practise untruth and lower ourselves.[28]

He does not ask too much of us. He knows nature changes slowly by a gradual process through effort and pain. He only asks us to keep the right ideal before us, to have hope and faith, to understand our limitations and accordingly to try as best we can without forcing the pace to approach the ideal.[29] This, he believes, is the way of highest attainment. "In every case," he once wrote to Mirabehn, "never go beyond your capacity. That is a breach of truth."[30] Thus though he wants the satyagrahi to be practical and prompt and not to leave things to eternity, he is not impatient.[31] He allows ample time for slow steady growth. "If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time cycle."[32] Besides, moral progress made in this life will be available to us in the future according to the doctrine of rebirth. ". . . I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted."[33] He also counts upon the infectious effect, on the masses, of the example set by the leaders. To quote from *Hind Swaraj,* "What a few may do, others will copy, and the movement will grow like the coconut of the mathematical problem. What the leaders do, the populace will gladly follow."[34] His emphasis is thus on the satyagrahi making an earnest endeavour in the right direction.

The ideal of truth and love may scare away people today, but what really matters in the long run is the soundness of the ideal rather than the apparent impossibility of its being practised by people in general. Were not people similarly sceptical

[28] *Yeravda Mandir,* p. 27.

[29] "My mind goes in advance of my actions. I do not force myself and therefore do not become a hypocrite." Gandhiji quoted in Mira, *Gleanings,* p. 14.

[30] *Bapu's Letters to Mira,* p. 75.

[31] Barr, pp. 170-71.

[32] *H.,* June 15, 1935, p. 138.

[33] *Y. I.,* II, p. 1204.

[34] *Hind Swaraj,* p. 86.

about the giving up of slavery, cannibalism and many other practices which seem so loathsome today? "Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But the victories of physical sciences would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life, which is summed up in love which is the law of our being."[35]

It is hardly necessary to add that Gandhiji is conscious of the morbid and harmful effects of the forced repression of our nature. He distinguishes between genuine self-control which "must brace one up" and super-imposed or mechanical self-control which "unnerves or saddens one" and approves of the former only.[36] In the last chapter we have quoted passages from his writings to show that he discourages repression. His ethical discipline is essentially a process of redirection and consists not only of inward acts of conscience but also of corresponding outward acts of observance. The vows of the control of palate, bread-labour, non-possession, etc. show the great importance Gandhiji attaches to action as indispensable to redirection. He believes that "success is there for the individual as soon as he has acted on the principles he holds."[37] As useful aids to sublimation Gandhiji also recommends silence, prayer and fasting.[38]

To sum up, instead of confining himself to physical behaviour, a mere fringe of man's nature, Gandhiji takes into account man's real self, his essentially spiritual character. He tells us how man should mould his physical nature so that he may acquire mastery over it and realize the best in him. This requires that man should live not merely by habit but by self-direction, i.e., by effort of will. It is Gandhiji's firm conviction—a conviction born of faith in God—that human nature is not fixed and immutable and that every man has limitless possibilities for good life. The whole conception of satyagraha rests on the psychological assumption that the innate goodness of the most brutal opponent can be aroused by the pure suffering of a

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35 *H.*, Sept. 26, 1936.

36 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 170.

37 Quoted by P. Spratt in an article on Gandhiji in the *Indian Review* for July 1938, p. 449.

38 For a brief discussion of these see pp. 123-25, *infra*.

truthful man. Thus pursuit of truth, i.e., development of conscious non-violence, is neither impossible, nor even impracticable, though it is a difficult ideal requiring constant effort and ceaseless vigilance.

But though his ideal is not psychologically impossible nor even impracticable, it has been criticized by Tagore and many others as puritanical, ascetic, negative, incomplete and unsound. Thus Gandhiji has been reproached for making life dull and boring by his inordinate emphasis on *tapasya* and *vairagya*. It has been said that he prescribes asceticism for its own sake and leaves no room for art and colour and thus deprives life of a good deal of its joy and significance. His ideal, it has been pointed out, means "refusing experience and shrinking from life". The poet Yone Noguchi calls Gandhiji "A pilgrim along the endless road of hunger and sorrow". One of his critics, who calls him "the high-priest of renunciation", remarks, "Gandhi belongs to the type of *sanyasi* who repress the flesh, consciously reject all the colour and warmth of life, denounce every thing which is not necessary for bare livelihood, hasten the dissolution of the body, so that the spirit imprisoned in it may the more quickly be united with the divine."[39]

Undoubtedly Gandhiji believes that the human body with its lust for power and pleasure is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul.[40] He believes that suffering and renunciation, "the incessant crucifixion of the flesh", are not incidental to life but its central facts, indispensable for moral and spiritual growth. Even during his student days in London renunciation appealed to him greatly as the highest form of duty.[41] In his "Confession of Faith" he writes, "Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth."[42] "High thinking," he wrote in 1946, "is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon-worship."[43] It is his firm

39 R. Fullop-Miller, *Gandhi, the Holy Man*, p. 157; S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 191, 202, 250; Spratt's article on Gandhiji in *Indian Review* for July 1938, p. 451; A. R. Wadia's article on "Mahatma Gandhi and Machines" in *Modern Review* for July 1931, p. 88.

40 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1935.

41 *Autobiography*, I, p. 168.

42 *Speeches*, p. 770.

43 *H.*, Sept. 1, 1946, p. 285.

conviction that "the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh."[44] "It is not possible to see God face to face unless you crucify the flesh. It is one thing to do what belongs to it as a temple of God, and it is another to deny it what belongs to it as to the body of flesh."[45] "The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. The secret of a happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. . . . Indulgence spells death."[46] He holds that "After a certain stage the flesh diminishes in proportion to the growth of the soul."[47] Thus according to him, "Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction, of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service."[48] "Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress."[49]

But why does Gandhiji consider suffering essential for spiritual growth? Spiritual freedom means capacity to love all, that is, to suffer for all. To rise to the highest reaches of the ideal of suffering love we must share the lot of the poorest and the lowliest. To that end we must limit our wants and discipline the flesh to serve the spirit. Says Gandhiji, "There is no limit whatsoever to the measure of the sacrifice that one may make in order to realize this oneness with all life, but certainly the immensity of the ideal sets a limit to your wants. . . ."[50] Indulgence and multiplication of wants are ruled out "as these hamper one's growth to the ultimate identity with the universal self."[50] Simplification of life on the part of the satyagrahi is essential if he is to bring about economic equality through non-violence.[51]

There may be no limit to the suffering and sacrifice which the life of non-violence may involve. But mortification as a means to subdue the flesh has its own limits. Mortification is not an end itself and has no inherent merit as such. So when the

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44 *Y. I.*, II, p. 107.
45 *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373.
46 *H.*, Feb. 29, 1946, p. 19.
47 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1203.
48 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 36.
49 *Y. I.*, I, p. 231.
50 *H.*, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 365.
51 *H.*, March 31, 1946, p. 64.

flesh comes under subjection and can be used as an instrument of service, mortification becomes unnecessary and even harmful in so for as it prevents one from making the full use of one's body for service.[52] "Suffering has its well-defined limits. Suffering can be both wise and unwise, and when the limit is reached, to prolong it would be not unwise, but the height of folly."[53]

By renunciation, however, he does not mean that other-worldliness which stands for ignoring the demands of our present life and retiring into the forest. "To do no work is no renunciation. It is inertia."[54] He wants us to develop the spirit of renunciation which transmutes work into worship so that we may be able to love and serve. He wants us to live a dedicated life, to do everything in a sacrificial spirit, using all our abilities for service.[55] Thus he reconciles renunciation and self-development with obligations of social and political life. It is hardly necessary to repeat that his ethical ideal implies a rational asceticism and not unnecessary, unhealthy repression. Thus he prescribes asceticism not for its own sake but as an indispensable means to realize the highest ideal known to man—the ideal of love that is service.

Nor do suffering and renunciation, when undertaken in the right spirit, frustrate our life and make it dark, dreary and joyless. Gandhiji lived up to what he preached. Was he not one of the happiest and most enlightened of men with an infinite capacity for bringing humour into the grimmest situation?

"Suffering cheerfully endured," he wrote in 1921, "ceases to be suffering and is transmuted into an ineffable joy."[56] Joy, Gandhiji points out, has no independent existence; it depends on our attitude to life; it is a matter of national and individual education.[57] In the midst of the moral confusion created by modern civilization he asks us not to forget the distinction made by the seers of ancient India between *preyas* and *shreyas*,[58] between a life of pleasures and the real happiness of life. The

[52] *H.*, Nov. 2, 1935, p. 299.
[53] *Y. I.*, March 12, 1931, p. 30.
[54] *H.*, April 20, 1935, p. 75.
[55] *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 82-85.
[56] *Y. I.*, I, p. 900.
[57] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 85.
[58] For this distinction see *Kathopanishad*, II.

source of real happiness is humility and self-sacrifice rather than self-assertion; regulation and restriction of wants rather than their indefinite multiplication. Real happiness is the fruit of a balanced, purposeful, disciplined life, of sharing the sorrows and bearing the burdens of others. From a distance the discipline may look difficult and scaring, but when one actually undergoes it and sheds all thought of self, one finds that, far from being oppressive and cheerless, the discipline is liberating and the burden light.

Nor does his ethical ideal exclude art, though he differs from the commonly accepted views on aesthetic appreciation.[59] Though he could do entirely without external forms in his own life, he was alive to the value of productions of art. But according to him, human art is rather petty and inadequate as compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in nature, the panoramic scenes of the starry heavens, the wonders of the sunset, the beauty of the crescent moon—the beauties that remind us of the greatest Truth, the Creator. He discerns beauty in the practice of tree-worship as symbolizing "true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom, which with its endless panorama of beautiful shapes and forms, declares to us as it were with a million tongues the greatness and glory of God." So far as works of human art are concerned, Gandhiji values them by their moral content and their utility as an aid to self-realization rather than by the beauty of their outward form. Whatever embodies truth, whatever expresses or assists the upward urge, the divine unrest of the soul, is true art. Thus he values music not for the so-called artistic appreciation but as an aid to prayer and moral development. To him "The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inward spirit of man." Truly beautiful creations are the expressions of right perception, so Beauty should be seen in Truth or through Truth. "Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, true art will arise." If art is pursued for its own sake and not as an aid to self-realization it may become an impediment and lead men astray. Besides, Beauty should give pleasure apart from any

59 For Gandhiji's views on art the references are: *Y. I.*, II, pp. 1025-36; R. Fullop-Miller, *Gandhi, The Holy Man*, pp. 60-64; *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 85; *H.*, Feb. 19, 1938, p. 10; April 7, 1946, p. 66; *Diary*, I, pp. 16 and 215-16; M. K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma*, pp. 78-79.

idea of possession. He believes that man's moral purity expressing itself through right action is a higher expression of art than the external forms like pictures, songs, etc. "A life of sacrifice is the pinnacle of art." True Beauty and art are not independent of the purity of private life. "Purity of life is the highest and truest art. The art of producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but the art of producing that music from the harmony of a pure life is achieved very rarely."

Gandhiji concedes that artists may be able to see Truth in and through Beauty. But he thinks in terms of the millions. The millions cannot be trained to acquire a perception of Beauty so as to see Truth in it. They should be shown Truth first and they will see Beauty afterwards. To him beautiful is that which can serve the starving millions. Thus he lays stress on the aesthetic value of *khadi* and other products of the non-exploitative rural industries. In 1946 he said to Agatha Harrison, "We have been taught to believe that what is beautiful need not be useful and what is useful cannot be beautiful. I want to show that what is useful can also be beautiful."

It has also been pointed out that "Gandhiji lays all stress on character and attaches little importance to intellectual training and development,"[60] and that character without intelligence is not worth much. Gandhiji no doubt believes that intellect without character is dangerous. The tremendous development of the art of destruction shows how man can misuse his intelligence to his own undoing. Similarly he has little respect for the modern ways of training the intellect, and considers right thinking rather than intellectual training to be the core of non-violence. He defines right thinking as the right conception of fundamentals.[61] He lays due stress on the importance of the intellect in the pursuit of non-violence and holds that belief in non-violence, specially in the case of leaders, should be intelligent and creative. "If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence."[62] Again, ". . .true practice of *ahimsa* means also, in

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[60] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, p. 509.

[61] Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 24.

[62] *H.*, July 21, 1940, p 210.

one who practises it, the keenest intelligence and wideawake conscience."[63] "In every branch of reform constant study giving one a mastery over one's subject is necessary. Ignorance is at the root of failures, partial or complete, of all reform movements whose merits are admitted."[64] He, however, believes that the conscious cultivation of non-violence will bring about the intellectual development of the satyagrahi. "Truth and non-violence are not for the dense. Pursuit of them is bound to result in an all-round growth of the body, mind and heart. If this does not follow. . .we are untrue."[65] Referring to *harijan* service he wrote in 1936, ". . .possession of a pure character combined with love of such service will assuredly develop or provide the requisite intellectual and administrative capacity."[66]

This rigorous discipline involving suffering and sacrifice is an essential qualification for the satyagrahi leader. It brings about the refinement of his moral sensibilities. Besides, satyagraha always involves a good deal of suffering in the form of imprisonment, physical hardship, beating, torture and even death. This requires that satyagrahis should so train themselves that their bodies might be proof against any injury that might be inflicted on them by tyrants seeking to impose their will on them. The satyagrahi leader cannot expect to inculcate in his followers the ideals of service and sacrifice unless he makes his own life an object-lesson.

The ideal of both Gandhiji and socialists is the non-violent democracy. The essential prerequisite of such a society is the refinement of the average man's nature so that he can respond adequately, without any coercion, to the demands of social service. But for this uplift of the common man we need, above all, the living witness of leaders and guides who are, as it were, the incarnations of the ideals of love and self-sacrifice. Those who live a life of indulgence and, instead of taking upon themselves the suffering of others, use violence, i.e., impose suffering upon others, cannot leaven society to the non-violent stage.

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[63] *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 274.

[64] *H.*, April 24, 1937, p. 84.

[65] *H.*, May 8, 1937, p. 98.

[66] *H.*, Nov. 7, 1936, p. 308.

Gandhiji's system of non-violent values does not, as is sometimes wrongly believed, make life primitive. In his own words, "...it is not an attempt to go back to the ignorant, dark ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness."[67] Complex, centralized political and economic life, which multiplies chances of exploitation, sacrifices non-violent values. The non-violent life, i.e., the life of service, he holds, must of necessity be simple, self-supporting and close to the soil. This implies a rural culture of decentralized satyagrahi communities and a new conscious life, simple and free and rich in opportunities.

The one way to advance towards such a society is the cultivation of non-violence by the masses under the guidance of satyagrahi leaders.

CHAPTER VI

THE DECISION OF THE SATYAGRAHI LEADER

The satyagrahi leader seeks truth through non-violent methods. To him the cardinal ethical maxim is that what conflicts with truth and *ahimsa* should be eschewed. Difficulties arise when he proceeds to apply this maxim to concrete situations of life and to determine what in a given case is in conflict with truth and *ahimsa*. There is sometimes an inner conflict between one duty and another. How should the satyagrahi faced with the inner turmoil determine the path of duty? What should serve as his ultimate moral guide? Should he be guided by public opinion, or should he depend on himself? In the latter case should he be guided by reason or by faith and conscience?

Gandhiji's life and the *obiter dicta* scattered through his writings give us his views on the problem. He attaches due importance to public opinion in a democracy. He believes that the satyagrahi should yield to public opinion in matters which do not involve departure from his personal religion or moral code.[1] But for ultimate moral guidance in matters of basic importance, the ethically disciplined satyagrahi must depend

67 *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 307.

1 *Y. I.*, I, pp. 207-08.

for true guidance on counsel from within. He must be a law unto himself. His soul is the seat of moral authority. His conscience, the voice of God, is the final judge of the rightness of every deed and thought.[2]

Usually reason plays a subordinate role in our decisions. In the words of Gandhiji, ". . . .Ultimately one is guided not by the intellect but by the heart. The heart accepts the conclusion for which the intellect subsequently finds the reasoning. Argument follows conviction. Man finds reason in support of whatever he does or wants to do."[3] Gandhiji, however, attaches due importance to reason. He holds that "On matters which can be reasoned out that which conflicts with reason must be rejected."[4] All the same he rejects the claim of reason to omnipotence. According to him there are spheres where reason cannot take us far and there we have to depend on faith.

Spiritual Reality, as we have discussed in chapter II, can be apprehended by faith and not by unaided reason. Similarly for moral guidance the satyagrahi may depend upon reason so far as it can take him. But the satyagrahi deals with soul-force, and in regard to his profound judgments faith and conscience, and not reason, must be his mainstay. Though reason cannot usurp the place of faith and conscience it helps the satyagrahi to scrutinize the soundness of the judgment and to communicate it to others.

Gandhiji occasionally described how he made his important decisions. His guidance came from God or conscience. But he also reasoned out why the decision to which he was prompted was correct. Thus:

"Rightly or wrongly, I know that I have no other resource as a *satyagrahi* than the assistance of God in every conceivable difficulty and I would like it to be believed that what may appear to be inexplicable actions of mine are really due to inner promptings."[5]

"Whatever striking things I have done in my life I have not done prompted by reason but prompted by instinct, I

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[2] *Ethical Religion*, p. 41.

[3] *Y. I.*, II, p. 934.

[4] *H.*, March 6, 1937, p. 26.

[5] *H.*, March 11, 1939, p. 46. See also *South Africa*, p. 5.

would say God."[6] In 1934 in a conversation with Mary Chesley Gandhiji said that he believed his guidance came from God and often, after seeing the way to go, he consciously reasoned out why that was the best way. In answer to the question, "How do you understand what is God's guidance for you when it is a question of choosing between two good things?" he replied, "I use my intellect on the subject and if I don't get any strong feeling as to which of the two I should choose, I just leave the matter, and before long I wake up one morning with the perfect assurance that it should be A rather than B."[7]

Similarly in 1941 he told Louis Fischer that though guidance in vital matters came from faith and instinct, he did not follow it unless his reason backed it. He pointed out that even in the case of fasts undertaken by him, before the fast began his reason was able to back his instinct.[8]

All the famous decisions of Gandhiji, e.g., the Bardoli decision in 1922, the one concerning salt satyagraha in 1930, the decision to start the movement of 1940-41, were judgments based on faith. Concerning the last decision he said, "It has not come from my intellect. It has come from recesses of the heart where dwelleth the Innermost. It is He who has given it."[9] In 1934 referring to his fasts he said, "I am not responsible for these fasts. . . . These fasts are bearable only because they are imposed upon me by a higher power and the capacity to bear the pain also comes from that power."

But imperfect man, even though morally disciplined, cannot know truth in its fulness. He cannot, therefore, claim to have infallible guidance.[10] What he mistakes for inspiration may be delusion, his intuition may be blind, his reason may miscarry. His emotions, his hopes and desires may, once in a while, vitiate his judgment. Why not, then, depend, even in regard to vital matters, on public opinion, the collective wisdom of the community?

Gandhiji gives us the reason why the satyagrahi who lives for the moral regeneration of society must be guided by his own

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6 *H.*, May 14, 1938, p. 110.

7 Barr, pp. 114-15.

8 *H.*, August 4, 1946, p. 246.

9 *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 289; Aug. 24, 1934, p. 223.

10 *Y. I.*, II, p. 79; *Y. I.*, III, p. 154.

inner judgment rather than by external demands of public opinion which may concern itself with conventional propriety: "...man is a self-governing being and self-government necessarily includes as much power to commit errors as to set them aright as often as they are made."[11] So "True morality consists not in following the beaten path but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it."[12]

Besides, "...often one learns to recognize wrong only through unconscious error. On the other hand if a man fails to follow the light within for fear of public opinion or any other similar reason he would never be able to know right from wrong and in the end lose all sense of distinction between the two....The pathway of *ahimsa*...one has often to tread all alone."[13]

Thus the satyagrahi leader must refuse to be led by the masses in vital matters, otherwise he will drift like an anchorless ship. Says Gandhiji, "I believe that mere protestation of one's opinion and surrender to mass opinion is not only not enough, but in matters of vital importance, leaders must act contrary to the mass opinion if it does not commend itself to their reason."[14] "What must count with a public servant is the approbation of his own conscience. He must be like a rudderless vessel who, leaving the infallible solace of his own conscience, ever seeks to please and gain the approbation of the public. Service must be its own and sole reward."[15]

This, however, does not mean undemocratic leadership or blind worship of authority. Gandhiji is conscious that unrestrained power corrupts. He writes, "I claim to be a democrat both by instinct and training."[16] "I detest autocracy. Valuing my freedom and independence, I equally cherish them for others. I have no desire to carry a single soul with me, if I cannot appeal to his or her reason."[17]

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[11] *Y. I.*, III, p. 154.

[12] *Ethical Religion*, p. 38.

[13] *Y. I.*, III, p. 858.

[14] *Y. I.*, I, p. 209.

[15] *Y. I.*, April 6, 1931, p. 77.

[16] *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 136.

[17] *Y. I.*, I, p. 208.

To him the moral autonomy of the individual also implies the moral autonomy of the group. Gandhiji's own life illustrates the principle. His inner voice, the intuitive insight of one of the noblest souls of all times, was his "mentor and monitor" from the early age of fifteen, revealing to him his path from day to day. In his long career as a satyagrahi leader, though he often yielded to public opinion in non-vital matters, in regard to his cardinal principles he was always against a compromise. At the same time he believed that groups have as much right to experiment with truth and to err as the individual.[18]

Thus Gandhiji's ideal rules out a weak, cringing, opportunist leader who pawns his conscience to retain his leadership and follows instead of leading. In case of a conflict between his basic principles and the opinion of his followers, the clear duty of the satyagrahi leader is to be true to the dictates of his conscience and to leave the group free to determine its own path.

So far as loyalty of the followers is concerned, Gandhiji is much in advance of the democratic practice as prevalent in the West. He is against the leader being followed blindly out of love and demands obedience based on deep conviction.[19] That is why in 1934, when he felt that the Congress intelligentsia, though loyal and devoted to him, did not see eye to eye with him on vital principles, he withdrew from the Congress so that he might not act as a dead-weight upon the organization, preventing its natural growth and the free play of reason among its members.[20]

Again, according to Gandhiji, the satyagrahi leader, even though he has the backing of a clear majority, should not disregard any strongly felt opinion of a minority; for such disregard based on mere numerical strength savours of violence.[21]

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[18] This is how Gilbert Murray describes the non-violent character of Gandhiji's leadership, "...he utters no dogma, no command, only an appeal, he calls to our spirits, he shows what he holds to be truth, but does not exclude or condemn those who seek the light in some other way." S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 197-98.

[19] *Speeches*, p. 608.

[20] See his statement, dated Sept. 17, 1934, reproduced in *History of the Congress*, pp. 922-32.

[21] *Y.I.*, II, p. 212.

The principle of leadership in authoritarian States is a striking contrast to Gandhiji's ideal. The authoritarian principle is, "arbitrary authority from the top down and unlimited obedience and responsibility from the bottom up." The modern militarist dictator is *par excellence* the propagandist leader. Instead of seeking his mandate from the sober, rational judgment of his people, he depends on the coercion of dissentient elements and a constant appeal to common fears and hatreds.

When a satyagrahi group engages in non-violent resistance the leader has to be invested with dictatorial authority, the internal democracy of the group has to be modified and a member's right to private judgment comes under restrictions. The members of a satyagrahi group may accept or reject the leader and his plan of action as a whole. But the acceptance should be without any mental reservation and the followers should have the fullest faith in the judgment of the general. His word is law and his followers should render implicit obedience to his commands. Tennyson's lines, "Theirs not to reason why. . . .Theirs but to do and die", apply to a satyagrahi army also.

Both in satyagraha and military warfare the position of the soldier in relation to the leader is very nearly the same: he "may not remain a unit in his regiment and have the option of doing or not doing things he is asked to do."[22] This is compulsion, no doubt, but it is not superimposed by the leader upon the satyagrahi soldier against the latter's will or with the object of humiliating him and robbing him of his dignity as man. This compulsion is self-restraint because the satyagrahi voluntarily comes under discipline due to his own inner urge, and he is, unlike the soldier in the army, free to leave the moment he likes.

In addition to the consideration that discipline is indispensable in group action, Gandhiji gives another reason why the decisions of the leader of a satyagrahi fighting group should not be under democratic control. With many satyagrahi soldiers non-violence may be a matter of expediency and policy rather than of faith. They have, therefore, a choice before them and may be tempted to fall back upon violence.[23] This is not so

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22 *Y.I.*, II, p. 1191.

23 *Y.I.*, Feb. 2, 1930.

with the satyagrahi leader who is non-violent "not out of painful necessity and weakness but out of choice and moral strength".

The satyagrahi leader, however, should not unnecessarily strain the loyalty of his followers. He should try to convince them and to carry their heart and reason with him. But when no conviction comes, the followers must fall back on faith.[24]

But to be guided aright by his conscience and to be able to determine truth independently the satyagrahi leader must acquire that purity which is, in Gandhiji's words, "the ripe fruit of strictest discipline". For the satyagrahi to be a law unto himself the invariable condition is that "he must then walk in fear of God and therefore continuously keep on purifying his heart."[25] In order to receive right guidance "one's mind must be attuned to the five necessary rules of love, truth, purity, non-possession and fearlessness."[26] Gandhiji also insists on self-effacement or reducing oneself to zero as a pre-condition of receiving God's guidance.

We have already discussed in detail the purificatory discipline which Gandhiji prescribes. This discipline integrates the life of the satyagrahi so that his *ahimsa* becomes dynamic and compelling and his intuitions become sure. He is able to have higher experiences and to apprehend the working of the soul-force.

Gandhiji also recommends silence, prayer and fasting as powerful factors in spiritual growth and as invaluable aids to discerning truth. Silence is, according to him, a part of the spiritual discipline of the satyagrahi. He felt as though he was naturally built for silence. During the time of silence he could best hold communion with God. It gave inward restfulness to his soul. "In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light." Silence is also essential for the seeker to surmount a natural weakness of men, that is, proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify truth consciously or unconsciously.[27]

Fasting and prayer help us to attain the supremacy of the spirit over the flesh and clarify our vision. But they must not be mere mechanical contrivances adopted for stage effect.

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[24] *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 158.
[25] *Y. I.*, III, p. 154.
[26] Barr, p. 115.
[27] *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373; *Autobiography*, p. 153.

"...prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and therefore prayer must be the very core of the life of man, for no man can live without religion...without prayer there is no inward peace."[28] Prayer is " a serious endeavour to remain...out of the flesh." Prayer is even more indispensable for the soul than food for the body. "For one may have a surfeit of food but never that of prayer."[29] "Prayer is not vain repetition, nor fasting mere starvation of the body. Prayer has to come from the heart which knows God by faith and fasting is abstinence from evil or injurious thought, activity or food."[30] "A heart-felt prayer ...is a yearning from within which expresses itself in every word, every act, nay every thought of man."[31] Fasting "puts life into one's prayer" and brings solace to the soul by putting it "in tune with the Maker".[32] Indeed, fasting is "the sincerest form of prayer". "There is no prayer without fasting and fasting which is not an integral part of prayer is a mere torture of the flesh." Such fasting is a penance and an intense spiritual effort.[33] Thus Gandhiji describes his self-purification fast of 21 days (beginning from 8th May, 1933) as "an uninterrupted twenty-one days' prayer". Fasting to be an integral part of prayer "has to be of the widest character possible". Fasting of the body has to be accompanied by fasting of all the senses. Gandhiji considers meagre food, i.e., food just enough to sustain the body for service, as a perpetual fast of the body.[34]

Gandhiji's own life is a unique record of research in the possibilities of prayer and fasting. He was an expert in fasting which was a part of his being and which he had, to the best of his light, reduced to a science.[35] As for prayer, he calls it

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28 *Y. I.*, Jan. 23, 1930, pp. 25-26.

29 *Nation's Voice*, p. 103.

30 *H.*, April 10, 1937, p. 63. Gandhiji once told C. F. Andrews that his fasts were a sort of outlet for him and whenever he felt he must burst with indignation or sorrow at injustice or impurities, i.e., when he found any sort of ill-will cropping up in himself, a fast took the feeling away and transformed it into love. Barr, p. 77.

31 *Y. I.*, III, pp. 976-77.

32 His statement dated Oct. 23, 1944.

33 Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 9.

34 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, pp. 241-42, 245 and 254.

35 His statement dated Sept. 21, 1932; *History of the Congress*, p. 923; *Y. I.*, II, p. 123; *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 228.

his greatest weapon.[36] He said in 1931, "As time went on my faith in God increased and the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seems to me dull and vacant without it."[37] There was not a moment when he did not feel the presence of a witness whose eye misses nothing. No act of his was done without prayer. He never found God wanting in response; he found Him nearest at hand when the horizon seemed darkest. When taking important decisions, he heard correctly and clearly "the still small voice within". This inner call was the voice of God. Once it had spoken Gandhiji rendered ready obedience, and for him there was no drawing back from the path ordained.

He had so attuned himself that he felt even his ordinary activities were at the prompting of the spirit.[38] Indeed, Gandhiji is a mystic spying, as it were, upon the twilight movements of the spirit.[39] He does not get a full view of the Divine—who does?—but the glimpses he succeeds in catching integrate his outlook and entitle him to be ranked with the greatest of men.

To sum up, Gandhiji's views on moral guidance give us the ideal of democratic leadership. He is not oblivious of the degenerating influence of unrestrained power. That is why he

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[36] *H.*, Dec. 9, 1939, p. 371.

[37] *Nation's Voice*, p. 102.

[38] *Autobiography*, II, pp. 61-62.

[39] Gandhiji believes that the pre-condition for receiving higher inspiration is that "there must be a great crisis of the soul when you are literally racked by 'mental anguish and torture'. In that crisis the soul of the individual either soars higher towards the Infinite Soul; or else, unable to bear the terrible strain, falls back and finds rest in a closer association with the physical body. In the first alternative the voice of Truth is heard; in the other, the individual gets identified with the world of matter, and shapes his conduct accordingly." Krishnadas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I, pp. 400-01. Concerning the decision about the satyagraha movement of 1940-41 also he said, "It was born at the end of infinite travail." *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 289.

Referring to his "experience of God" which rid him of fear of temptations, he once remarked, "This experience of being 'born again' is what the Christian speaks of in connection with his belief in Jesus, that is, not the historical Jesus, but in a mystical relation which must be experienced to be understood. This being 'born again' means knowing God as Father and this excludes fear.... This 'becoming' may be through great pain but all the pain is forgotten afterwards in the joy of the new birth." Barr, p. 108.

Gandhiji also holds that "the humility which feels itself nothing before God is necessary for mystical experience." Barr, p. 114.

imposes on the satyagrahi leader a two-fold check—internal as well as external. He insists on a moral and spiritual cleansing, a self-discipline which gives the leader a sense of moral proportion and equips him for the fearless pursuit of truth and the exercise of the mightiest of weapons, i.e., soul-force. He also advocates rational obedience based on the private judgment and the free conscience of the citizen. If the world is to be saved from the triumph of authority over liberty and justice, if peace and democracy are to prevail, leaders of unquestioned integrity and a courageous, vigilant civic sense in the masses are indispensable.

CHAPTER VII

SATYAGRAHA AS THE WAY OF LIFE

The purificatory discipline discussed above aims at equipping the individual for the practice of satyagraha.

The term *satyagraha* was coined by Gandhiji to express the nature of the non-violent direct action of the Indians in South Africa against the Government there. He was specially anxious to distinguish clearly this group action from passive resistance.

In common parlance satyagraha is interpreted as non-violent direct action; but non-co-operation, civil disobedience, fasting and other forms of non-violent direct action do not exhaust the content of satyagraha. The literal meaning of satyagraha is "holding on to truth" or "insistence on truth". Spiritual unity is the highest Truth and the only way to realize it is to be non-violent, i.e., to love all and suffer for all. That is why Gandhiji identifies satyagraha with "love-force" or "soul-force". Thus satyagraha is the relentless pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means. It is the "vindication of truth, not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's own self."[1] It is nothing but *tapasya* for truth.[2] In this comprehensive sense it includes all constructive, reforming activities, all acts of service. Satyagraha thus does not exclude constitutional

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[1] *Speeches*, p. 501.

[2] *Y. I.*, II, p. 838.

methods. As a matter of fact Gandhiji considers civil resistance a constitutional right.[3]

Satyagraha, specially its two principal offshoots, non-co-operation and civil disobedience, should not be confused with the passive resistance movement in England in the beginning of this century. In South Africa Gandhiji himself used the term *passive resistance* in the sense of satyagraha. The seventeenth chapter of *Hind Swaraj* which is entitled "Passive Resistance" is really a description of satyagraha. But even in 1908 he was conscious that "passive resistance" was a more popular though less accurate description of satyagraha than soul-force or love-force.[4] Later he drew a clear distinction between these two terms.

Both satyagraha and passive resistance are methods of meeting aggression, settling conflicts and bringing about social and political changes. However, the two differ fundamentally. The difference between the two is due to the fact that passive resistance[5] as practised, for example, by suffragettes and non-conformists in England and by Germans in the Ruhr against the French, is a political weapon of expediency, while satyagraha is a moral weapon based on the superiority of soul-force over physical force. Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak; while satyagraha can be practised only by the bravest who have the courage of dying without killing. In passive resistance the aim is to embarrass the opponent into submission; in satyagraha, to wean him from error by love and patient suffering. In passive resistance there is hardly any place for love for the opponent; in satyagraha there is no room for hatred, ill-will and the like. Thus "satyagraha is dynamic, passive resistance is static. Passive resistance acts negatively and suffers reluctantly and infructuously; satyagraha acts positively and suffers with cheerfulness because from love and makes the sufferings fruitful."[6] Though always distinguished from and generally avoiding violence which is not open to the weak,

[3] See ch. X *infra*.

[4] *Hind Swaraj*, p. 65.

[5] Passive resistance and non-resistance are generally interchangeably used. According to C. M. Case, however, non-resistance is essentially an attitude of submission and of passive suffering, while passive resistance is a more active and even aggressive attitude. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 51.

[6] Mahadev Desai in a note in *Harijan*, June 25, 1938, p. 164.

passive resistance does not exclude the use of violent methods on suitable occasions; satyagraha, on the other hand, does not permit violence in any form even under the most favourable circumstances. Unlike satyagraha passive resistance can be used as a supplement or preliminary to violent revolution. Passive resistance lacks inwardness: it does not share the scruples of satyagraha about the purity of means and ignores the moral character of persons employing it. On the other hand, in satyagraha there is an organic connection between the achievement of the objective and the inner reform of the satyagrahi. Passive resistance is not by its very nature universal in its application. It cannot, for example, be directed against one's dearest relations as satyagraha can be. Passive resistance offered in a spirit of weakness and despair is weakening morally; while satyagraha emphasizes all the time internal strength and actually develops it. Satyagraha can thus offer more effective and determined opposition to injustice and tyranny than passive resistance. All the same there is nothing passive about the latter, for resistance is always active.[7]

All the world over in every age non-violence has been the method of settling family disputes. Gandhiji applied this rule of domestic life to various spheres of group life. By his life-long researches he made satyagraha "the moral equivalent of war" and the technique of solving group conflicts.

But satyagraha, being soul-force, is "the Way, the Truth and the Life". It is applicable, in addition to conflicts, to all other activities of life. Thus it can be used by individuals in their daily life in relation to parents, children and friends, even criminals and the sub-human creation. Says Gandhiji, "It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility."[8] "For me, the law of satyagraha, the law of love, is an eternal principle. I co-operate with all that is good. I desire to non-co-operate with all that is evil, whether it is associated with my wife, son or myself."[9]

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[7] *Autobiography*, II, p. 154; *Y. I.*, I, p. 222; *Speeches*, p. 501; *South Africa*, ch. XII; *H.*, May 14, 1938, p. 111 and June 25, 1938, p. 164.

[8] *Y. I.*, III, p. 444.

[9] *Y. I.*, II, p. 1054.

Blessing two married couples in 1937, he remarked, "Don't be hypocrites, don't break your health in the vain effort of performing what may be impossible for you. Understand your limits and do only as much as you can. I have placed the ideal before you, the right angle. Try as best as you can to attain the right angle."[12] He writes ". . .marriage is the most natural and desirable state when one finds oneself even against his will living the married life in his daily thought."[13] He believes that "it is harmful to suppress the body if the mind is at the same time allowed to go astray."[14] He is, however, against artificial methods of birth-control, for they seek to enable people to escape the consequences of their acts and thus put a premium upon vice.[15]

Gandhiji gives us the reasons why the satyagrahi leader must virtually achieve *brahmacharya* or married *brahmacharya*. If the leader is an almost perfect *brahmachari* practically nothing would be impossible for him. For if the vitality responsible for the creation of life is husbanded, instead of being dissipated, it is transmuted into the creative energy of the highest order. Sublimation of passions strengthens the whole being of the individual, physical, mental and spiritual and gives him power unattainable by any other means. Complete *brahmacharya* means complete control over thought. "And since thought is the root of all speech and action, the quality of the latter corresponds to that of the former. Hence perfectly controlled thought is itself the power of the highest potency and can become self-acting."[16] Again, "thought-control means maximum of work with minimum of energy."[17] Moreover, the realization of truth and non-violence which means the realization of universal love through the service of mankind is impossible except for a *brahmachari*. One cannot live both after the flesh and the spirit. Indulgence tightens the bond of the flesh and is the negation of self-control, selflessness and

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[12] *H.*, April 24, 1937, p. 82.

[13] *Y. I.*, II, p. 1234.

[14] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 20.

[15] In very exceptional cases however he would permit not only artificial methods but also sterilization. *Diary* I, p. 24.

[16] *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.

[17] *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 160.

non-attachment without which one cannot be a satyagrahi. *Brahmacharya,* even married *brahmacharya,* also saves the satyagrahi engaged in public service from the distractions of running a household.[18]

Gandhiji's emphasis on *brahmacharya,* perhaps more than any other principle of his, has been misunderstood and vehementally criticized. It has been said that contrary to the researches of modern psychology and medicine he advocates repression, that his ascetic principle has carried him too far, that the sex act is not a purely carnal act but is a means by which life is perpetuated and that, on the whole, his case is weak.[19]

But Gandhiji in no way preaches repression. His writings abound in passages bearing ample evidence that he is not indifferent to the dangers of repression. It is hardly necessary to add to the three passages already quoted.[20]

As we have pointed out while dealing with his views on truth, he makes a distinction between those who seek truth independently and those who merely accept and pursue it, between the leader and the follower, between one actively aspiring and working for moral perfection and the common run of humanity.[21] Of the former alone does Gandhiji demand virtual achievement of *brahmacharya.* So far as ordinary persons are concerned, he puts the correct ideal before them also, but he

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Cf. Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, "If a man remains absolutely continent for twelve years he achieves supreme power. A new nerve develops in him, called 'the nerve of intelligence'. He can remember everything and knows everything." Quoted in R. Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna,* p. 277. As Romain Rolland points out, all the great mystics and the majority of great idealists have clearly realized what formidable power of concentrated soul, of accumulated creative energy, is generated by a renunciation of the organic and psychic expenditure of sexuality. *Ibid.,* p. 226.

18 *Autobiography,* II, p. 148; *Yeravda Mandir,* pp. 16-17.

Cf. "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife." I Corinthians, VII, 32, 33.

19 S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi,* pp. 18, 48, 105 & 191; *The Aryan Path,* Sept. 1938, p. 452; C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas,* p. 101; *Speeches,* introduction by C. F. Andrews; Spratt's article, "Gandhiji as a Psychologist" in the *Indian Review,* July, 1938.

20 See p. 79 above.

21 See p. 60 above.

wants them to try to reach it to the best of their ability. But he considers the sex act divorced from the purpose of procreation as an act of indulgence and makes a strong case against it when he says, "There can be no limit to the practice of an ideal. But unlimited sex indulgence, as everybody would admit, can only result in certain destruction of the individual or the race."[22]

But Gandhiji does not consider *brahmacharya* to be an impossible ideal. He refuses to set limits to the capacity of the human soul. He believes that the soul is one for all, and the positive reliable evidence of even one case of successful self-control is decisive. Thus if *brahmacharya* is possible for Gandhiji it is possible for any human being making the required effort.[23] He points out that some of the highest among mankind in all climes have practised this high ideal. Human urges are capable of immense redirection. The researches of late Dr. J. D. Unwin show that the energy leading to the development of society increases in proportion as society imposes pre-nuptial and post-nuptial restrictions upon sexual opportunity.[24] But, as has been pointed out by Aldous Huxley, social energy and human entropy resulting from compulsory sex-control promise cultural refinement and not necessarily ethical refinement.[25] Gandhiji's ideal is, however, far superior to mere mechanical celibacy and is, therefore, not open to this objection.

Of the various aids to *brahmacharya* Gandhiji has elevated the control of the palate to the rank of an independent observance. This vow means that we should be extremely simple in our food, eating not to please our palate but to keep the body in proper working condition.[26] For the purpose of rooting concupiscence out of mind, Gandhiji recommends dietetic restrictions and avoidance of courses suited to a life of pleasure. He also recommends fasting. But all this discipline is useful only when the mind co-operates with the body, i.e., when it

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22 *H.*, March 20, 1937, p. 44.

23 *H.*, May 30, 1938, p. 125.

24 J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture.*

25 Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 318.

Human entropy is the tendency towards increased refinement and accuracy.

26 *Autobiography*, II, p. 161.

develops a distaste for the objects that are denied to the body.[27] Gandhiji also recommends ceaseless effort in the form of prayer, for, according to him, perfection, i.e., freedom from error, comes only through God's grace.

For the development of truth and non-violence fearlessness is indispensable. Fear lies at the root of untruth and violence. Cowardice is born of fear. In the words of Gandhiji, "Cowardice. . .is possibly the greatest violence, certainly far greater than bloodshed and the like that go under the name of violence. For it comes from want of faith in God and ignorance of His attributes."[28] Truth and non-violence can be cultivated only by the strong and "strength lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies."[29] Despotism subsists only on the foundation of frightfulness. Gandhiji lays very great stress on fearlessness, considers it the sign of self-purification and defines *swaraj* as the abandonment of fear of death.[30]

One of the objects of Gandhiji had been to instil into his countrymen self-confidence and to rid them of their fear and "oriental submissiveness". He was undoubtedly successful in a large measure in training the nation to cultivate and practise the virtue of fearlessness. Viscount Samuel remarks, "He taught the Indian to straighten his back, to raise his eyes, to face circumstances with steady gaze."[31]

According to Gandhiji, "Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear,—fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on."[32]

But how to become fearless? "Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man."[33] "All the fears revolve round the body as the centre and would therefore disappear as soon as one got rid of attachment for the body."[34] To develop non-attachment we

27 *Autobiography*, III, p. 258.

28 *Y. I.*, III, p. 976.

29 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 29.

30 *Speeches*, p. 824; *Y. I.*, Jan. 7, 1932; *Y. I.*, I, p. 898.

31 S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 295.

32 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 43.

33 *Speeches*, p. 217.

34 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 45.

must conquer our passions, the internal foes. Gandhiji emphasizes the need of achieving the balanced state of mind or mental equipoise by means of control of passions. For the *sthitaprajna*, who has conquered himself, external fears cease of their own accord. But this state is possible to one who has had "a glimpse of the *atma* that transcends the body".[35] Such an individual would acquire capacity for sacrifice of the highest type. This is why Gandhiji believes that "That nation is great which sets its head upon death as its pillow. Those who defy death are free from all fear."[36] Gandhiji also lays stress on the need of prayer and of unflinching obedience to dictates of conscience, for the voice of conscience is the will of God and final judge of the rightness of every deed and every thought.[37] Determined and constant endeavour and cultivation of self-confidence are also necessary.[38]

In *satya* and *ahimsa* are also implicit the vows of *asteya* (non-stealing) as well as *aparigraha* (non-possession) which follows logically from *asteya*. The two along with the vows of bread-labour and *swadeshi* determine the economic aspect of Gandhiji's philosophy.

Obviously one wedded to truth and universal love should not steal. But to Gandhiji non-stealing means much more than what it does in common parlance. Not only taking another person's belongings without his permission or knowledge and appropriating something in the belief that it is nobody's property, but also receiving something which one does not need, a father eating something secretly, keeping his children in the dark, improper multiplication of one's wants, coveting anybody's belongings, bothering about things to be acquired in the future, plagiarism, etc.,—all these are instances of physical or mental offences against the vow of non-stealing.[39] According to him acquisitiveness divorced from need is theft. Gandhiji's economy is the economy of needs and welfare and not that of acquisitiveness which is the characteristic of capitalism.

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35 *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 286.

36 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 73.

37 *Ethical Religion*, p. 41; *Y. I.*, Jan. 7, 1932.

38 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 44.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 31-35.

Non-possession is the extension of the meaning of stealing to the possession of things we do not need in the immediate present. Absolute non-possession, which is the corollary of absolute love, would mean total renunciation. This would demand that man should have no house, no clothing and no stock of food for the morrow, depending on God for his daily bread. The body too is a possession and man should learn to use it for the purpose of service so long as it exists, so much so that service, and not bread, becomes the staff of life.[40] So long as the body lasts it calls for possessions some of which are unavoidable. As a satyagrahi takes to non-violent vows his attachment to the body will diminish and he will be able to reduce his wants and possessions.[41] As applied to thought non-possession implies that the so-called knowledge which turns us away from the values of inner life and from the service of mankind, is ignorance pure and simple and should be eschewed.[42] Non-possession thus means non-dependence on material things. It implies total abolition of private property in all kinds of belongings, a view more radical than that of extreme communists.

Absolute non-possession is an abstraction and is unattainable in its fulness. In the words of Gandhiji, "To possess nothing is, at first, not like taking your clothes off your body but like taking your flesh off your bones."[43] "But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a scale of equality on earth than by any other method."[44]

Gandhiji admits that a certain degree of comfort, physical and cultural, is essential for the satyagrahi's moral and spiritual advancement. But the satisfaction of these needs must not go beyond a certain level, otherwise it will degenerate into physical and intellectual voluptuousness and hinder the satyagrahi in his service of humanity.[45] The aim of the satyagrahi

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40 *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 38-39.

41 *Ashram*, p. 47.

42 *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 40-44.

43 Quoted by Maude Royden in S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 56.

44 N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, p. 201.

45 *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

As R. D. Gillespie points out among cultures in which acquisitiveness is accentuated it is linked to the needs for power and security. Gillespie

should be not the multiplicity of material wants but rather their restriction consistently with comfort. He should cease to think of getting what he can. On the other hand, he should decline to receive what others cannot get. In brief, the satyagrahi may possess what he needs when nobody else stands in need of it, and when possession does not involve violence and exploitation.

Non-possession implies the ideal of trusteeship in relation to accumulated wealth, talents of people, and their earnings beyond their immediate needs.

Gandhiji would dispossess every one of all his private property if this could be achieved non-violently. People cannot amass wealth without violence and without the co-operation and help of other members of society. They have therefore no moral right to use any of it for personal advantage and to exploit others. So long as they are not prepared to give up possessions beyond their immediate needs they should change their attitude and act not as proprietors but as trustees, utilizing the property for the benefit of the community.

Similarly some people with talents have the ability to earn more than others. He would not cramp their intellect and would allow them to earn more. But they should adopt the attitude of trustees and use the bulk of their greater earnings for the good of the State. Apart from earnings, people should also use even their talents for the good of the community. Thus he stands for socialization of property as well as talents.

Trustees should act as owners not in their own right but in the right of the community and should be given a fair

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suggests that "by providing social security, by discouraging the cultivation of power impulses and by shifting the basis of self-esteem from power and material appearances to solid worth in the sense of co-operation in the community, we should not be violating at any rate any strong inherent need, and might eliminate the socially artifacted need for possessions, and so remove one cause for the anxious reactions of the younger and the depressive reactions of older people." As foundations of the type of character which alone would make a better society possible he recommends, "Anonymity within community to which one belongs...the acquisition of skill and the development of gifts and abilities rather than material possessions; co-operativeness rather than competitiveness; realistic acceptance of the foundations of freedom which implies taking of risks for freedom's sake; and the acceptance of self-sacrifice to the point of death if need be...." *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, Chapters III and VII, especially pp. 100 and 240.

commission commensurate with the value of service rendered to the society. The rate of the commission should be regulated by the State.

The original trustee should have the right to nominate his successor but the choice must be finalized by the State—an arrangement which Gandhiji expected to put a check on the State as well as the individual. Thus he is against inherited riches and unearned income. According to him, "A trustee has no heir except the public." The misuse of the trust property should be set right by the State confiscating it with the minimum use of violence. He is also in favour of death duties and of riches being heavily taxed.

To bring about trusteeship he would depend on the effect of the example set by the satyagrahi, persuasion, creating a general atmosphere in favour of trusteeship and non-violent non-co-operation. He expected that "If this truth was imbibed by the people generally, it would become legalized and trusteeship would become a legalized institution." As pointed out above he is not against the State resorting to confiscation with the minimum use of coercion when necessary. He, however, distrusts the State and prefers voluntary non-violent action.

Critics often demur to the conception of trusteeship of which, they think, the capitalists take advantage in relation to their workers. To Gandhiji, however, the theory is a necessary corollary of non-violence; for "It was in order to avoid confiscation that the doctrine of trusteeship came into play, retaining for society the ability of the original owner in his own right."

He says, "My theory of 'trusteeship' is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence."[46] He wished the ideal of trusteeship became a gift from

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[46] References to Gandhiji's views on trusteeship are: *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 45-49; *Nation's Voice*, pp. 170-72; *Y. I.*, III, p. 124; *H.*, March 31, 1937, p. 197; Dec. 16, 1939, p. 376; Aug. 25, 1940, p. 260; Feb. 22, 1942, p. 49; March 8, 1942, p. 67; April 12, 1942, p. 116; March 31, 1946, p. 67; Feb. 16, 1947, p. 25; Feb. 23, 1947, p. 39; March 2, 1947, p. 47 and N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, "The Theory of Trusteeship".

India to the world. If accepted by the world, he felt sure it would remove exploitation and causes of wars from international relations.

The conception of trusteeship seems to be implicit in the communist ideal also. In the classless society, when violence and profit-motive are eliminated, those in charge of productive and other activities of society will not be salaried civil servants, for the State itself will wither away. They will need for their upkeep some money or its equivalent and unless, in the management of activities entrusted to their charge, they are inspired by the ideal of selfless service and act as trustees, the very existence of the classless and Stateless society will be endangered.[47]

Gandhiji's critics also cavil at the ideal of poverty which is inconsistent with the materialistic outlook of capitalism and Marxism. But the vow of non-possession, it should be remembered, is the ideal of voluntary poverty, the poverty of divine meekness that is capable of inheriting the earth, the poverty that enriches, ennobles and elevates. It is not the involuntary, demoralizing poverty of destitution, the poverty of despair and inertia.[48] Gandhiji does not preach voluntary poverty to a people suffering from involuntary poverty. He realizes that the material condition of the Indian masses stands far below the economic minimum indispensable for morally efficient life. "They have never known the pain of plenty to appreciate the happiness of voluntary suffering, hunger or other bodily discomfort."[49] The economic ruin and exploitation of the country under the British Government was one of the important causes of his determined hostility to it. According to him, "the economic constitution of India, and for the matter of that the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of elementary necessaries of life remain in the

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[47] *Gandhivad: Samajvad* (Hindi), edited by Kaka Kalelkar, pp. 52-58.

[48] Vinoba distinguishes clearly between the two kinds of poverty in a speech published in *Harijan*, May 16, 1936.

[49] Mahatma Gandhi, *The Wheel of Fortune* (1922), pp. 75-76.

control of the masses."[50] The activities of the All-India Village Industries and the All-India Spinners' Associations are a concrete expression of his great concern for the economic reconstruction of India's life according to this basic principle.

Gandhiji's own long, dedicated life had been a model of non-possession. In spirit and letter he relentlessly followed the vow, putting his body under severe ascetic discipline and reducing its needs to the narrowest limit.

Why does Gandhiji consider the conquest of man's acquisitive propensities as an essential discipline for the satyagrahi? This is due to his basic principles as well as practical considerations. The theory of non-possession is a corollary of his belief in soul-force. Soul-force transcends material media, and spiritual progress, i.e., realization of spiritual unity, is not possible unless we crucify the flesh and simplify our wants.[51] Nature produces only what is needed for the moment and no more.[52] The principle of spiritual kinship demands that the satyagrahi must try to remove poverty and inequality with their attendant evils by possessing what is just enough for the present and take no thought for the morrow.[53] Besides, the accumulation and defence of wealth inevitably involve the use of violence.[54]

Gandhiji also explains the ideal in terms of his religious beliefs. The Creator is the undisputed Master of all that we in our ignorance call our property. Man is such an insignificant atom that any idea of possession on his part seems ridiculous and offends against God's sovereignty. Nothing belongs to man, not even his body. As His creature it behoves man to renounce everything and lay it at His feet. This act of dedication, the expression of a determination to live a life of service to our fellow creatures, is the justification or the condition of the use of things to the extent necessary for such a life. The experience of saints and prophets who lived a life of voluntary poverty

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[50] *Y. I.*, III, pp. 923-24.

[51] *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 36-37; *Speeches*, p. 324; *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373. See also Chapter V *infra*.

[52] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 36.

[53] *Speeches*, pp. 287 and 324; *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 37.

[54] *H.*, Feb. 16, 1947, p. 25.

and contributed most to our heritage convinces us that this complete surrender to Him and an unshaken faith that our needs shall be supplied shall not go unrewarded.[55] Possession of things which are not indispensable to us in the present is a sign of want of firm faith in the goodness of Providence.

His experience of the baneful psychological and moral effects of man's love of wealth further strengthens his convictions. Jesus' stern and well-known teaching on the subject of riches,[56] he thinks, gives us an eternal rule of life. Like Jesus Gandhiji also believes that one cannot serve both God and Mammon. He realizes how possession creates attachments and tends to monopolize man's thought and action to the utter neglect and languishing of the soul. Thus the pursuit of truth becomes impossible. Much of violence in the world can be traced to disputes concerning possessions.

"It is my certain conviction based on experience," said Gandhiji to Dr. Mott, the American evangelist, in 1936, "that money plays the least part in matters of spirit."[57] In another conversation with Dr. Mott, summing up his views on the place of money in the life of the satyagrahi, he said, ". . . .I have always felt that when a religious organization has more money than it requires, it is in peril of losing its faith in God and pinning its faith on money. You have simply to cease to depend on it. . . .The fact is, the moment financial stability is assured, spiritual bankruptcy is also assured."[58]

If the satyagrahi tries to live according to the vow of non-possession he will become fearless and his simple life will leave

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[55] Gandhiji's Speeches reported in *Harijan*, January 30, 1937.

[56] "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." Matthew, X, 9-10. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Matthew, XIX, 24.

[57] *H.*, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 368.

[58] *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 371.

This is how Mahadev Desai sums up Gandhiji's views on non-possession: "You may have occasion to possess or use material things, but the secret of life lies in never missing them. Money will come for an object to which you are prepared to give up your life, but when there is no money you will not miss it, and the object will be carried on, perhaps, all the better for want of it." *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 371.

him ample time and energy for the pursuit of truth. The economic structure and economic relations of society will be revolutionized. Voluntary poverty will train the satyagrahi for suffering which is an essential part of the life of service. It will also help to bring about a just distribution of reasonable comforts of life among the masses.

Closely related to the above vows is the vow of physical labour or bread-labour.[59] It is a corollary of the principle of non-stealing and a means of realizing non-possession.

The economics of bread-labour, which Gandhiji calls "the living way of life", means that every man has to labour with his body for his food and clothing. 'Bread' is symbolic of the unavoidable primary necessities of life. These require productive labour and one who enjoys them without properly sharing in the labour is a thief. The so-called civilized but really depraved people who multiply wants and free themselves from manual labour really exploit the labour of the poor people, using the latter as mere means for their gratification. Gandhiji feels that if people were convinced of the value and necessity of bread-labour there never would be any want of bread and cloth.[60]

Food is the first among these primary necessities. The ideal form of body-labour, therefore, should be related to agriculture. If that is not possible, body-labour should take the form of any other productive manual work connected with some primary need, e.g., spinning, weaving, carpentry, smithery, etc. Gandhiji's great love for the spinning-wheel is due to the fact that spinning, even more than agriculture, deserves to become the universal form of bread-labour. He writes, "A satyagrahi occupies himself in productive work. There is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning."[61] Besides,

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[59] The first person to coin the term 'bread-labour' was the Russian writer Bondaref. Later the idea was given wider publicity by Tolstoy and Ruskin; and Gandhiji is indebted to these two for the principle. The principle is also supported by the well-known teaching of the Bible, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread." According to Gandhiji the third chapter of the *Gita* "seems to show that sacrifice chiefly means body-labour for service." *The Gita According to Gandhi*, pp. 130 and 173-76.

[60] *H.*, Sept. 7, 1947, p. 316.

[61] *H.*, Dec. 2, 1939, p. 366.

"No other village craft has the capacity that spinning and its auxiliary processes have for putting so much money into the pockets of the largest number of villagers with minimum of capital outlay and organizational effort."[62] Due to its association with the satyagraha movement, the spinning-wheel has also become the symbol of social, political and economic freedom.

Bread-labour, however, does not include intellectual labour. For "the need of the body must be supplied by the body. . . . Mere mental, that is, intellectual labour is for the soul. It is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment."[63] Physical labour over and above that for earning bread as well as intellectual labour should be the labour of love done solely for the benefit of society.[64] "Intellectual work. . .has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist upon is the necessity of physical labour for all. No man ought to be free from that obligation. It would serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output."[65]

But bread-labour, which Gandhiji considers as the highest form of social service,[66] should be voluntary and not compulsory. India's millions today undoubtedly obey the law of bread-labour for half the year. But they would shirk the law if they could. Theirs is a compulsory obedience, a drudgery that deadens their finer feelings and breeds poverty, disease and discontent.

It may be difficult to practise the ideal in its entirety. But even if without fulfilling the whole law people performed physical labour enough for their daily bread, society should go a long way towards the ideal.[67] Even if people earn through intellectual labour, their remuneration should be equal to that of manual workers. Those who earn more than necessary for their requirement must use the bulk of their greater earnings for the good of the community. In other words, over-possession should go with trusteeship.[68]

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62 *H.*, Dec. 16, 1939, p. 376.
63 *H.*, June 20, 1935, p. 156.
64 *H.*, June 1, 1935, p. 125; June 29, 1935, p. 156.
65 *H.*, Feb. 23, 1947, p. 36.
66 *H.*, June 1, 1939, p. 125.
67 *H.*, June 29, 1935, p. 156.
68 *Y.I.*, Nov. 26, 1931.

If generally accepted the law will simplify life, facilitate the observance of non-violent values and "co-ordinate the vision of the inward eye with the work of the hands." It will make men able-bodied and minimize disease. Educational psychology has for long recognized that the use of hands profoundly helps mental growth. It will eliminate large-scale production and profit-motive and bring about virtual self-sufficiency of the village and the country.[69] It will be at once a levelling up and a levelling down, a remedy for the exploitation of the poor and the swelled head of the rich. Everybody will be his own master and class distinctions will disappear.

Universally practised, non-possession and bread-labour would lead to economic equality. Even if they were partially observed and if people who earned more than their immediate needs adopted the attitude of trustees, equitable distribution would be brought about. Hence Gandhiji's remark, "My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see it cannot be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution."[70]

Swadeshi is another important vow and a key concept in Gandhiji's philosophy. *Swadeshi* means belonging to or made in one's own country. To Gandhiji it is "a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to the individual."[71] He calls it the sacred law of our being and thinks that the law "is engrained in the basic nature of man".[72]

The object of *swadeshi* is not political but spiritual, i.e., to enable the individual to realize his spiritual unity with all life. As the body is a hindrance to the fullest realization of this unity and is not the natural or permanent abode of the soul, *swadeshi*, in its ultimate and spiritual sense, stands for the final emancipation of the soul from its earthly bondage.[73] So long as this emancipation has not taken place the only way of realizing this unity is the service of God's creation. The law of

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69 For a discussion of large-scale machine production in relation to non-violence, see Chapters VIII and XI *infra*.

70 *Y. I.*, III, p. 124.

71 *Speeches*, p. 280.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 325.

73 *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 89.

swadeshi lays down the only correct method of serving it. This is how Gandhiji defines the law:

"*Swadeshi* is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote."[74] "*Swadeshi* was that spirit which dictated man to serve his next-door neighbour to the exclusion of any other. The condition...was that the neighbour thus served had in his turn to serve his own neighbour."[75]

Swadeshi is an all-sided patriotism of an exalted spiritual type. It implies that we must serve the country of our birth in preference to others and that, inside the country, we must serve the immediate neighbourhood in preference to remoter places. It also demands that we must hold fast to indigenous ideals and institutions. This does not mean a blind, unthinking attachment to the familiar institutions, but a discriminating regard for them with a readiness, where necessary, to reform and borrow from others whatever is really healthy and beneficient.

Purity of service is of the very essence of *swadeshi*. *Swadeshi* never countenances the advancing of illegitimate, narrow, selfish interests of groups and the neglect of the interest of the country or humanity. It only requires us to discharge our legitimate obligation to our neighbours and to prepare them to sacrifice themselves, when necessary, at the altar of national and universal service.

The spirit of sacrifice underlying *swadeshi* should go beyond a man's own community and should embrace the whole of humanity. "...the logical conclusion of self-sacrifice was that the individual sacrificed himself for the community, the community sacrificed itself for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation and the nation for the world."[76] Thus a man can serve his neighbours and humanity at the same time, the condition being that the service of the

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[74] *Speeches*, p. 275.

[75] *H.*, March 23, 1947, p. 79.

This seems to be the reason of the repeated assertion of Jesus that his mission was to the Jews and of his forbidding his disciples to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans and sending them "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel".

[76] *Speeches*, p. 281.

neighbours is in no way selfish or exclusive, i.e., does not involve the exploitation of any other human being. "The neighbours would then understand the spirit in which such service was given. They would also know that they would be expected to give their services to their neighbours." This spirit of self-sacrifice also implies that "A truly free India is bound to run to the help of its neighbours in distress." By implication the neighbours of India's neighbouring countries are India's neighbours also.[77]

Gandhiji discusses the reason why *swadeshi*, which he calls "the acme of universal service",[78] implies preference of the nearest and the immediate. Our capacity for service, he says, is limited by our knowledge of the world in which we live. So we must, as our first duty, dedicate ourselves to the service of our immediate neighbours—the nearest and the best known to us.[79] Pure service of one's neighbour can never result in disservice to those who are remotely situated. On the other hand if one sets out to serve people in a distant place one is doubly guilty. He is guilty of culpable neglect of his neighbours who have a claim on his service. His attempt would also be an unintended disservice to the people of the distant place, for in his ignorance he would very likely disturb the atmosphere of the new place.[80] Besides, it is an arrogance to think of serving distant places when one is hardly able to serve even his immediate neighbours.[81] Thus *swadeshi* recognizes "the scientific limitation of human capability for service".[82]

Gandhiji believes that the teaching of the *Gita*, viz. "It is better to die performing one's duty or *swadharma* but *paradharma* or another's duty is fraught with danger," applies to *swadeshi* also, for *swadeshi* is *swadharma* applied to one's immediate environment.[83]

The *swadeshi* doctrine permeates the whole of Gandhiji's philosophy—his views on culture, his metaphysical and ethical

[77] *H.*, March 23, 1947, pp. 78-79.

[78] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 93.

[79] *H.*, Aug. 22, 1936, p. 217.

[80] *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 89-91.

[81] *Speeches*, p. 281.

[82] *H.*, March 23, 1947, p. 79.

[83] *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 91.

for greater vigilance and watchfulness in connection with the Harijan cause."[89]

Fasting is also a means of resisting injustice and converting the evil-doer. As such it is "the highest expression of the prayer of a pure and loving heart". It is an appeal to the wrong-doer's better nature with the object of evoking the best in him. The fast of a person like Gandhiji always exerts a tremendous influence on public opinion. According to Gandhiji, as a technique of influencing the masses its effectiveness is due to the fact that the mass mind is influenced not through speeches and writings but only by something which they understand well, i.e., suffering, and "the best and most acceptable method is that of fasting." "My repeated experience," he said in 1934, "here and in South Africa has been that when well applied it has been the most infallible remedy....The only language they (the masses) understand is the language of the heart; and fasting, when utterly unselfish, is the language of the heart."[90]

But this weapon cannot be lightly wielded. It can be resorted to on rare occasions and by one skilled in the art or under expert guidance.[91] If undertaken without previous preparation and adequate thought it is not a satyagrahi fast but hunger strike.

Gandhiji lays down the qualifications of the person who can use this form of satyagraha and the occasion when it can be properly resorted to.[92] Mere physical capacity to fast is no qualification. The satyagrahi must possess spiritual fitness and a clear vision. A living faith in God is indispensable. In a satyagrahi fast there can be no room for lack of faith, anger, impatience, or selfishness.[93] These make the fast violent. "....In

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89 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 260.

90 *Conversations*, p. 127.

91 *H.*, March 11, 1939, p. 46; July 7, 1942, p. 248.

92 *Autobiography*, II, p. 213; *Y. I.*, II, p. 1183; *H.*, March 18, 1939, p. 56 and *Ashram*, pp. 15-18.

93 Thus a fast to wring money from a person or even to recover a debt is an instance of coercive hunger strike undertaken for a selfish purpose. Such misuse deserves to be firmly resisted, for, if fasting with a view to recover money were encouraged, there would be no end to scoundrels blackmailing people by resorting to this means. See *H.*, Sept. 9, 1933 and *Y. I.*, II, p. 1183.

addition to truth and non-violence a satyagrahi should have the confidence that God will grant him the necessary strength and that, if there is the slightest impurity in the fast, he will not hesitate to renounce it at once. Infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose, and perfect calm must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these qualities all at once, no one who has not devoted himself to following the laws of *ahimsa* should undertake a satyagrahi fast."[94] According to Gandhiji, those intending to go in for a satyagrahi fast should certainly possess some personal experience of fasts for spiritual purification.[95]

It is obvious from the above that fasting, though it has a place in individual as well as group conflicts, cannot be used correctly and effectively by the masses. It can be resorted to only by select and qualified individuals.

The mistake of the person or the group for whose reform a fast is undertaken must have moved the satyagrahi to the very depth of his being, and he must feel an inner urge, the clear call of conscience. It cannot be undertaken against one's opponent; for it will be a kind of violence done to him. The satyagrahi invites penalty from the opponent for disobedience of his orders, but he cannot inflict on himself penalties when the opponent refuses to punish him.[96] Fasting can be resorted to only against one's nearest and dearest and solely for his or her good.[97] "A satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed."[98]

The object of the satyagrahi's love for whose reform he undertakes a fast may be an individual or a group. Thus Gandhiji's Rajkot fast was with a view to make the ruler repent his breach of promise. His five-day fast at Bombay in November 1921 was directed against the people of that place, being a

94 *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 322.

95 *Ibid.*

96 D. G. Tendulkar and Others, *Gandhiji: His Life and Work*, pp. 368-69.

97 It would be a clear case of its misuse for an ordinary satyagrahi volunteer indiscriminately to fast for imposing his opinion on his co-villagers or neighbours and compelling them to withdraw co-operation from the Government. *Y. I.*, I, p. 941; *Y. I.*, II, p. 1183.

98 *H.*, April 21, 1946, p. 93.

warning appeal to them to stop the riots that had broken out on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales to that city. The fast of September 1932 was undertaken by him "to sting Hindu conscience to right religious action" and to pit his own life against the efforts of the British Government to separate the depressed classes from the caste Hindus by giving the former separate electorates and thus ensuring their "bondage in perpetuity".[99] The Calcutta fast (September 1947) was an appeal to Hindus and Muslims to stop communal violence and live in peace. It was meant "to activize the better, peace-loving and wise elements in society, to rescue them from mental sluggishness and make goodness active." His last fast (January 1948) at Delhi was for the protection of the Muslim minority in India and the establishment of communal harmony. "My fast," he observed, "is against no one party, group or individual exclusively and yet it excludes nobody. It is addressed to the conscience of all, even the majority community in the other Dominion." He called it his greatest fast and said, "It will end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all the communities brought about without any outside pressure, and from an awakened sense of duty."[100]

Though Gandhiji holds that satyagraha in the form of fasting cannot be undertaken against an opponent, this general principle admits of exceptions. He himself fasted at least thrice against the British Government and once he warned the Government against a fast. On December 2, 1932, while a prisoner, he went on a sympathetic fast to lend support to Shri Patwardhan's demand for scavenging work in jail.[101] On August 15, 1933, Gandhiji again started fasting against the Government. He was a civil disobedience prisoner and, as a

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[99] His statement to the Press, dated Sept. 21, 1932. This fast of his no doubt succeeded in attaining its immediate objective as well as in raising a ferment in Hindu society. But it induced some of the Harijan leaders to consent to the giving up of separate electorates against their will.

[100] *H.*, Sept. 14, 1947, p. 324; Jan. 18, 1948, p. 514; *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 385.

[101] Shri Patwardhan was a satyagrahi prisoner fasting to enforce his demand. The request had been previously rejected by the Government as the jail rules forbade scavenging work being given to caste Hindus. But it was conceded soon after Gandhiji's fast began.

gesture of unity with the depressed classes, demanded facilities for guiding, from inside the jail, the anti-untouchability movement which he had made his sole concern after his fast of September 1932. After about a week of fasting, the Government released him unconditionally.

In 1932 he warned the then Secretary of State for India that the Government terrorism had crossed the legitimate bounds and was brutalizing and demoralizing the officials, that this alarming state of affairs was agitating his fundamental being and that as a protest he might, if there was a call from within, sacrifice himself by fasting to a finish.[102] Soon after this warning Gandhiji threw himself into the movement for the removal of untouchability and the ordeal of fasting to a finish was avoided.

His twenty-one days' "fast according to capacity"[103] in the Aga Khan's palace at Poona in 1943 was Gandhiji's protest against the attitude of the British Government in India and "an appeal to the highest tribunal" for justice which he had failed to secure from the Government. The Government held the Congress, and particularly Gandhiji, responsible for the campaign of violence and revolutionary activity which broke out in India on August 9, 1942. But the charges were never proved before an impartial tribunal. Gandhiji laid the whole blame for these happenings at the door of the Government whose tyrannical policy drove the people to the point of madness. He invited the Government to convince him that he was wrong and he would make adequate amends. He also pleaded with them to end the political impasse. The Government would do neither. In fact, the Viceroy went to the length of imputing to him the cowardly motive of attempting to find, by means of the fast, "an easy way out". This condemnation without trial made him a helpless witness to what was going on in the country including the privations of millions owing to the universal scarcity

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[102] His letter, dated the Yeravda Central Prison, March 11, 1932, reproduced in full in *History of the Congress*, pp. 908-12.

[103] Gandhiji called it "a fast according to capacity" because instead of taking water with salts which he usually did during his fasts and which his system refused those days, he decided to add juices of citrus fruit to make the water drinkable. For his wish was not to fast unto death but to survive the ordeal. See *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, p. 40.

stalking the land and caused him intense agony. According to him, the remedy prescribed by the law of satyagraha in such moments of trial was to "crucify the flesh by fasting".[104]

The above instances indicate that occasionally a wrong-doer's misdeeds may so circumscribe the satyagrahi's life and freedom that the anguished soul may call for this last line of resistance.

One of these compelling conditions which would justify satyagrahi prisoners employing the weapon is insulting, inhuman behaviour towards them. Some instances of such behaviour are throwing of the prisoners' food at them, depriving them of their religious liberty, using abusive language, etc. Its use would not be justified for securing release from imprisonment.[105]

The method of fasting has been subjected to severe criticism. It has been characterized as terrorism against which "the action of an opponent has no alternative between surrender and the fasting individual's suicide." Thus fasting is exploiting against an opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry and mercy.[106]

On the occasion of Gandhiji's Yeravda fast Tagore called it "the ultimatum of mortification to God for his scheme of things". To resort to it is, according to him, to refuse the great gift of life with all its opportunities to hold up till the last moment the ideal of perfection which justifies humanity.[107] Some critics pointed out at the time of the Rajkot fast that "democracy cannot be built" by the method of fasting,[108] which cannot be employed by the masses. Besides, one may make a mistake about the imperative necessity of fasting and thus abruptly terminate one's power to further the cause of truth and love. There is also the danger that it may be exploited by some as a measure of coercion and intimidation.

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104 *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, p. 22.

105 *South Africa*, pp. 345-46; J. H. Holmes, *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 209-10 and 215; *H.*, Aug. 19, 1939, p. 240 and April 23, 1938, p. 89.

106 Mr. George Arundale's correspondence with Gandhiji published in the Indian Press in March 1939; *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, p. 73.

107 His letters to Gandhiji published in *Harijan*, July 1, 1933.

108 *H.*, April 15, 1939, p. 88.

Further, it is natural for people to fear lest the fasting satyagrahi may fast to death and to yield to his demands. This risk is especially great if the satyagrahi is a great man like Gandhiji whose unique place in national life exerts an almost irresistible pressure on the opponent. Fasting may thus inhibit clear thinking and may lead to coercion instead of conversion. This is a risk which fasting shares with all kinds of suffering. The sight of suffering causes a sympathetic response in the beholder. This response renders a dispassionate discussion of the issue of the conflict difficult, at least for the time being. But persuasion and gentler methods failing, undertaking suffering to convert the opponent is far better than inflicting suffering to suppress him. Besides, in the long run the issue is clarified and truth prevails. As Gandhiji put it in his letter to Sir Reginald Maxwell in 1943, "which is better, to take the opponent's life secretly or openly, or to credit him with finer feelings and evoke them by fasting and the like? Again, which is better, to trifle with one's own life by fasting or some other way of self-immolation, or to trifle with it by engaging in an attempt to compass the destruction of the opponent and his dependents?"[109] According to him, it is the outbreak of violence which arrests the growth of democracy. Being a technique of non-violent resistance, it is rooted in the recognition of the principle of infinite moral worth of human beings. As such, it diminishes violence and helps in the growth of democracy.[110]

Gandhiji is fully alive to the risks involved in fasting as a method of satyagraha.[111] This is why he insists on its being very sparingly used and only by those or under the direction of

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109 *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, p. 74.

110 *H.*, April 15, 1939, p. 88.

111 Gandhiji draws a distinction between satyagrahi fasting and suicide. The will to live is natural and life has a purpose. Suicide defeats that purpose and is not justified. But if a person suffering from an incurable disease feels that he has become a burden to others without being able to serve them and that his life has become as much agony for those who have to serve him as for himself, he may well dispose of his life. Being tired of struggle or intense physical pain, however, does not justify this extreme step. Similarly there is no justification for it so long as a man is capable of any service through ideas, advice etc. Suicide by starving is better than other forms because it tests one's firmness and there is an opportunity to revise one's decision. *H.*, June 10, 1940, p. 146 and *Diary*, I, pp. 194-95.

those who have mastered the science of satyagraha and acquired the necessary discipline.

But, though risky in practice, it is undoubtedly sound in principle. The end of human life being self-expression, man may stake it when there is available no other means of seeking redress from an intolerable moral situation. Fasting has been for ages, and will ever remain, an effective method of conversion. The ultimate strength of *ahimsa* lies in self-immolation even as the ultimate strength of *himsa* consists in devouring the opponent. Gandhiji's own conclusion is that "Fasting unto death is an integral part of satyagraha programme. . . ."[112]

The satyagrahi's mainstay is his inner strength, his soul-force. He must not, therefore, depend on external help. For ". . . the strength of the spirit within mostly evaporates when a person gets and accepts support from outside. A satyagrahi must always be on his guard against such temptations."[113] Gandhiji supports the argument by referring to domestic quarrels. If a satyagrahi wishes to remove untouchability from his family, he will surely not invite friends to suffer with him but will bear all the penalties his father inflicts on him and rely on the law of love and suffering to melt his heart. The satyagrahi may invite the friends of the family to persuade the father. But he may allow no one to share with him the privilege and the duty of suffering.[114] Gandhiji is against the satyagrahi suing in the court or calling the police because these are external aids meant to coerce and not to convert.

According to Gandhiji, the non-violence of the satyagrahi must be judged by its result. The satyagrahi's *ahimsa* is pure and his suffering adequate if the opponent's heart is touched and he comes round. "I hold it to be an axiomatic truth that true *ahimsa* never fails to impress itself on the opponent. If it does, to that extent it is imperfect."[115] "A non-violent action accompanied by non-violence in thought and word should never produce enduring violent reaction upon the opponent."[116] The

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112 *Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, cited above, p. 370; *H.*, July 26, 1942, p. 248.

113 *South Africa*, p. 286.

114 *Y. I.*, II, pp. 821-22.

115 *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 112.

116 *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 172.

opponent should feel that resistance is not intended to do him any harm and his attitude must soften. "...*ahimsa* ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponent's attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart."[117] "It is the acid test of non-violence," he wrote in 1938, "that in a non-violent conflict there is no rancour left behind, and in the end the enemies are converted into friends."[118] Again, "genuine satyagraha should never excite contempt in the opponent even when it fails to command regard or respect."[119]

Satyagraha as the way of life implies that our non-violence must extend to the criminal also. It is the criminals that suffer most from violence in society. In fact, coercion is claimed as an essential attribute of the State on account of the need to punish crime for the maintenance of the system of rights. Non-violence, it is said, may do when the conflict is between decent persons, but it would be of no avail against a criminal. Gandhiji rejects this line of thought and holds that "It is only when you meet with resistance, as for instance, when a thief or murderer appears, that your non-violence is put on its trial....Living among decent people your conduct may not be described as non-violent."[120]

According to Gandhiji, "The word *criminal* should be taboo from our dictionary. Or we are criminals...in secret."[121] The difference between criminals is only one of degree. "The rich, moneyed man, who made his riches by exploitation or other questionable means, was no less guilty of robbery than the thief who picked a pocket or broke into a house and committed theft. Only the former took refuge behind the facade of respectability and escaped the penalty of law. Strictly speaking, all amassing or hoarding of wealth, above and beyond one's legitimate requirements, was theft."[122]

"All crime is disease and should be treated as such." The disease is a product of the prevalent social system. The criminal

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117 *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 72.

118 *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 327.

119 *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 113.

120 *H.*, May 13, 1939, p. 121.

121 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 218.

122 *H.*, Aug. 11, 1946, p. 255.

is thus a victim of the existing social system.[123] The worst diseases of the modern society are love of wealth and love of power, both being rooted in ignorance. These vitiate our entire social, economic and political life so as to favour the few at the cost of the many.

The penal system also aggravates the malady. In actual practice Governments still stick to retribution and deterrence. On these is often super-imposed the object of reforming the prisoner, but reform goes ill with retribution and the result is the large figures of recidivism.

Gandhiji seeks to carry through an all-round revolution so as to minimize violence and usher in the non-violent State. This consummation will undoubtedly attack the problem at the root and enormously diminish crimes.

In his ideal Stateless democracy based on non-violence there will be no crime. But the ideal is unrealizable in its entirety. In the predominantly non-violent State "there will be crime but no criminals."[124] Crime will, no doubt, be minimized but not eliminated. So the non-violent State of his conception will not be a policeless and prisonless State. But the police and the prison will be far different from what they are today, and the criminal will be non-violently weaned from crime.[125]

But the first step lies with the individual. Unless the average man adopts non-violence as a creed, the non-violent State can never be realized. The satyagrahi who adopts non-violence as a creed should treat the criminal even as he treats an ordinary opponent.

The way of non-violence rules out passive, cowardly acquiescence in crime which makes the individual party to the crime. Similarly non-violence is inconsistent with retaliation or seeking police aid. "You cannot touch his (the criminal's) heart and win his confidence, if at the same time you are prepared to go to the police and inform against him. That would be gross betrayal of trust. A reformer cannot afford to be an informer."[126]

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[123] *H.*, May 5, 1949, p. 124; Aug. 11, 1946, p. 255.

[124] *H.*, May 5, 1946, p. 124.

[125] *H.*, Aug. 11, 1946, p. 255.

[126] For details see Chapter XI *infra*.

As regards the non-violent way of dealing with crime, it may be pointed out that most of the serious crimes either relate to property, or are assaults on women. So far as property is concerned, the satyagrahi is inspired by the ideals of non-possession and bread-labour and should own as little as possible. In any case he should not possess more than what is necessary for his moral, mental and physical wellbeing. To be rich amidst grinding poverty is illegitimate and "Non-violence in the very nature of things is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains."[127] If the satyagrahi looks upon some property as his own, he may keep it only so long as the world allows him to own it.[128]

Besides avoiding all violent defence of property, he should seek no outside help, endure thieves and burglars, treat them like erring blood-brothers and apply non-violence intelligently.[129] Thus, doors may be left open and belongings so arranged as to be easily accessible. Persuasion may be used, if there is an opportunity. This uncommon kindness will, in an average case, upset and agitate the thief. He will respond to the satyagrahi's love and reform his ways. To meet the menace of thieves and dacoits the satyagrahi should also go among, and cultivate friendly relations with, the communities from which thieves and dacoits generally come.[130] He should win their confidence by loving and selfless service and help to rehabilitate them by teaching them honest ways of living.[131]

In case somebody seeks to deprive the satyagrahi of some property which he holds as a trustee, his suffering will take a different form. Instead of bearing the loss of property he will put himself between the despoiler and his object and die, if necessary, in the attempt to save it without using any violence.

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[127] *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236.

[128] *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 254.

[129] *Y. I.*, II, pp. 867-68; *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 10-12; *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 63-65; *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 194; *H.*, Aug. 11, 1946, p. 255.

[130] *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 215. F. Mary Barr refers to a marauding criminal tribe given to thieving and living in the neighbourhood of Sabarmati Ashram. It was won over by the active helpfulness of the *ashramites*. Barr, p. 38. See also *Ashram*, p. 39.

[131] *H.*, Aug. 11, 1946, p. 255.

When India was undivided Gandhiji often advised the people of the Frontier Province to learn the art of non-violent self-defence in relation to the trans-border tribesmen who plundered and kidnapped the people of the province. According to him, a non-violent approach to the problem involves trusting and befriending the tribes and not regarding them natural enemies. Efforts should be made to serve them and explain to them things in a loving and sympathetic manner. People of the Frontier Province should also try to raise these tribesmen above penury by teaching them cottage industries and thus removing the principal motive that leads them into the raiding.[132]

How should a woman behave if threatened with violation? And what would be the duty of the satyagrahi in whose presence the assault took place? These questions were put to Gandhiji scores of times. To him men and women are equal in status, their functions, though different, being complementary. Women, he believes, make even better satyagrahis than men, because, being mothers, they have greater courage of the right type and immeasurably greater spirit of self-sacrifice. Indeed violence is against their nature. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women. On the other hand if women ape men, forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for its protection, "It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end."

But the way of satyagraha is only for the woman who acquires the requisite self-control and lives a simple, natural life. To be non-violent she has to avoid the modern craze of dressing to attract attention and improving upon nature by painting herself and looking extraordinary.[133] If she tries to be Juliet to half a dozen Romeos, she cannot develop the non-violent spirit in her. To be non-violent she must forget that she ever was or can be the slave of man's lust and extend her love to the whole humanity.

If a woman thus revolutionizes her way of thinking and living, she will find that purity is the best strength.[134] Gandhiji

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[132] *H.*, Oct. 22, 1938, p. 304; Oct. 29, 1938, p. 310; Nov. 5, 1938, p. 314; Jan. 28, 1939, p. 448; July 13, 1940, p. 208; *Y. I.*, I, pp. 719-23.

[133] *H.*, Dec. 31, 1938, p. 499.

[134] For virtues which Gandhiji included in purity, see Manu Gandhi, *Bapu—My Mother*, pp. 10-11.

believes that "The veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity."[135] He also holds that "...it is physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. The outrage takes place only when she gives way to fear or does not realize her moral strength."[136] Her purity makes her conscious of her strength. If perchance she finds herself in danger, she should resist the lust of the assailant even to the extent of immolating herself. Even if gagged or bound, the resolute will would give her the strength to die.[137] Similarly the satyagrahi relation or friend of such a woman should stand between the assailant and his intended victim. He should then either dissuade the assailant from his wicked purpose or face death.

Even if a woman is attacked by a group of assailants, a part of the group trying to carry away the woman and the other isolating and beating her brother or relation, the plan of non-violent defence will remain the same. Non-violent self-defence consists in being prepared to die bravely and with honour. The satyagrahi woman would protect herself without caring or waiting for aid from her brother or sister and face death.[138] Surrender has no room in Gandhiji's plan of life. A woman should take her own life rather than surrender. But behind Gandhiji's approval of suicide under such circumstances is the belief that one whose mind is prepared even for suicide will have requisite courage for such mental resistance and purity that her assailant will be disarmed. If the choice is between taking one's own life and that of the assailant Gandhiji would prefer suicide.[139]

This method of defence by soul-force is far superior to armed resistance. It will, in all probability, exhaust the assailant's passion and awaken his soul. It will very likely steel the heart of others to put an equally brave defence. Besides, death in non-violent defence will not make the position even worse as defeat in armed resistance will do. Defeat or death in armed resistance, instead of stilling the fury or violence, feeds it by

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[135] *Y.I.*, II, p. 862.

[136] *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 266.

[137] *H.*, Dec. 31, 1938, pp. 408-09; *Y.I.*, II, pp. 861-62.

[138] *H.*, Oct. 5, 1947, p. 354 and Sept. 15, 1946, p. 312.

[139] *H.*, Feb. 9, 1947, p. 9.

In fact, he goes further and holds that if we want to make organized non-violence in group conflicts really effective, we must practise it in all aspects of our daily life.[10] Our non-violence, if true, must be a part of our normal life, must be in our thought, word and deed and must colour all our behaviour.[11] Thus he wrote in 1935, "Non-violence to be a creed has to be all-pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others."[12] Non-violence in politics may be, he feels, a virtue of necessity and a cover for cowardice. It is only in relations other than those with the Government, e.g., in domestic and other social relations, when we have an equal choice between violence and non-violence, that non-violence could be said not to be a mere expedient.[13] This is why, according to him, non-violence like charity must begin at home. He says, "The alphabet of *ahimsa* is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family."[14] Gandhiji insists that public satyagraha is only an extension of private or domestic satyagraha and that every case of the former should be tested by imagining a parallel domestic case.[15]

It is, indeed, futile to try to enthrone non-violence in inter-group and international relations unless it is also sought to be enshrined in the hearts of individuals. Violence in the private life of a satyagrahi is an indication of inadequate discipline. It shows that he is blind to the basic law of satyagraha, the principle of spiritual kinship with others. It is an unmistakable sign that he has not yet reached that level of moral development and self-mastery which makes violence intolerable. Human life being an indivisible whole, violence in the satyagrahi's private life must project itself into his behaviour as a member of the satyagrahi group.

Acceptance of non-violence by an individual in public affairs only means that his is the non-violence of the weak and

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[10] *H.*, June 29, 1940, p. 181.
[11] *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.
[12] *H.*, Oct. 12, 1935, p. 276.
[13] *H.*, Nov. 19, 1938, pp. 336-37.
[14] *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 214.
[15] *Y. I.*, II, p. 821.

that he accepts non-violence only as a policy which he may change in face of heavy odds and overwhelming temptations. This is a hesitant attitude which makes a poor soldier. "A soldier fights with an irresistible strength when he has blown up his bridges, burnt his boats. Even so it is with a soldier of *ahimsa*."[16] Gandhiji's advice, therefore, is that "*Ahimsa* must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible. Otherwise it will be only an empty hulk, a thing without potency or power."[16]

According to him, acceptance of non-violence as a weapon of expediency, as distinguished from genuine thorough-going non-violence, may bring about political freedom in a country like India. But this will be "democracy as machinery" or "parliamentary *Swaraj*" rather than real non-violent *Swaraj* or "democracy as faith". For "non-violence as expediency" means "non-violence so far as profitable and violence when necessary". Violence implies treating men as mere means. Non-violence of the weak is thus the denial of the basic principle of democracy, i.e., the least among men has infinite moral worth. On the other hand, non-violence of the brave stands for the equality of all persons. It never encroaches on the rights of others and leaves them full scope for development. *Swaraj* won through a half-hearted non-violence will inevitably be followed by the usual scramble for grabbing power. It will not bring freedom and power to the weak and the poor and will not be a genuine democracy. This is why Gandhiji was of the opinion that non-violence of the weak will never take us to the goal of freedom, and "if long practised may even render us unfit for self-government."[17]

It is remarkable that in his earlier non-violent movements Gandhiji did not insist on the satyagrahi accepting non-violence as a creed. This was, perhaps, the price he paid to collaborate with others to realize his ideal. He expected that the practice of non-violence as a policy would gradually prepare people for its acceptance as a creed. But this toning down is compromising one's means. His experience brought home the mistake and later he demanded of the satyagrahi firm, unshakable faith in the principle.

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16 *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 174.

17 *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 197.

Historically too the use of non-violence by isolated individuals in their private life began long before its emergence as a group technique. Even Gandhiji had acquired extensive experience in the use of non-violence in various situations of personal life before he used it as a political technique. The lessons of truth and *ahimsa* were burnt into his soul in early childhood and he began to mould his life according to these laws. The environment in which he was brought up was saturated with Vaishnava and Jaina traditions of *ahimsa*. His saintly mother was a model of disciplined life reared on fasts and vows, and his exceptionally brave, truthful father set him an object-lesson in non-violent resistance.[18] Mrs. Gandhi also made her contribution by practising non-violent resistance against him. This is how Gandhiji pays his tribute to her, "I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other hand, ultimately made me ashamed of myself and cured me of my stupidity in thinking I was born to rule over her; and in the end she became my teacher in non-violence. And what I did in South Africa was but an extension of the rule of satyagraha which she unwillingly practised in her own person."[19]

Gandhiji's whole life is full of experiments which demonstrate how truth and love enable one to solve life's complex problems. With truth and love and silent suffering and, when occasion demanded, by fearlessly walking into the very jaws of *himsa*, he converted many an inveterate opponent, drawing out the best in him. And whenever he noticed a mistake or a failing on his part, he made a clean and prompt confession and adequate amends. His *Autobiography* and other writings are replete with experiences of a most creative nature—experiences that moulded his character and influenced his philosophy. The father of satyagraha could not have nursed it up into the mighty weapon capable of being wielded by large masses of men but for his long experience, right from childhood onwards, in the working of the law of love in his personal life.

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[18] See p. 20 *supra*.

[19] Quoted by J. S. Holyland in *Mahatma Gandhi* edited by S. Radhakrishnan. For an instance of resistance on the part of Mrs. Gandhi see *Autobiography*, II, ch. X, p. 138.

Accepting non-violence as the law of life implies that the individual must be non-violent in relation to others, particularly when resisting evil and injustice. The test of a satyagrahi's non-violence comes in the stress and strain of conflict. But before he proceeds to give battle to injustice emanating from others he must try to root it out in his own self. "Non-violence begins and ends by turning the searchlight inward."[20] Reforms in external conditions can come only after inner conditions are set right. The employment of satyagraha against others must be preceded by its employment against oneself. This means intelligent cultivation of non-violent values. This self-discipline which includes control of thoughts and emotions develops in the satyagrahi the inner strength, the soul-force that becomes irresistible.

Gandhiji does not prescribe absolute *ahimsa* and complete self-discipline. These are not of this world. Perfectibility rather than perfection is his motto. He believes in ceaseless striving. The satyagrahi must put before himself the ideal of the non-violence of the brave. He must not let his non-violence degenerate into cowardice. For the rest he must try to approach the ideal as best he can.

In human society there will always be important differences and sometimes conflicts. So far as the non-violent way of settling conflicts and resisting wrongs is concerned there often arise dreadful dilemmas rendering the path of the satyagrahi difficult. The satyagrahi must have courage and patience, initiative and resourcefulness, a spirit of research and readiness to take risks. For guidance as to how exactly to deal with a particular situation, he must depend on his own enlightened conscience. But we may state in this chapter Gandhiji's views on some general questions connected with satyagraha as individual action. No hard and fast line of demarcation can be drawn between satyagraha in dyadic and group relations. The principles of individual action also apply to corporate action which in addition requires thorough organization and much greater attention to discipline. The individual may employ non-violent resistance against individuals or groups.

The satyagrahi is essentially a man of peace. He does not go about picking quarrels or planning struggles in advance.

[20] *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 98.

"That is the beauty of satyagraha. It comes up to oneself, one has not to go in search for it. That is a virtue inherent in the principle itself. A *dharma-yuddha*, in which there are no secrets to be guarded, no scope for cunning and no place for untruth, comes unsought; and a man of religion is ever ready for it. A struggle which has to be previously planned is not a righteous struggle."[21] The satyagrahi seeks his self-realization through social service. Whenever he finds some hindrance in the way, whenever his sensitive conscience perceives some injustice and he feels the inner urge, he uses the weapon of satyagraha to remove the obstacle. Satyagraha can be undertaken only for social good and never for personal gain;[22] for one who cannot rise above considerations of personal gain and loss is unfit to be a satyagrahi who has to be always ready to stake his all to vindicate truth and justice. The desire to protect one's self-respect is however a "good cause", for the society in which self-respect is at a discount is morally in a bad way. Obviously ill-gotten gains and immoral acts cannot be defended by satyagraha.[23] Thus a capitalist cannot non-violently defend his capital the accumulation of which always involves violence.[24]

Even in regard to issues involving social good the satyagrahi will decide upon non-violent resistance after taking into consideration his own limitations and the nature and gravity of injustice. Thus, as Gandhiji's life bears out, he may on occasions overlook a small injustice in order to conserve his strength for bigger battles.[25]

The aim of individual as well as group satyagraha is not to crush, defeat or punish the tyrant or break his will. It is not even to harm or embarrass him, though the resistance and suffering may, as a matter of fact, cause the wrong-doer embarrassment. The satyagrahi loves the opponent as a human being and aims at rousing him to a sense of equity by an appeal to the best in him, i.e., at converting him. Conversion implies that the opponent realizes his mistake, repents and there takes place a peaceful adjustment of differences. As Gandhiji once

21 *South Africa*, p. 5.
22 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1183.
23 *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236.
24 *H.*, Feb. 16, 1947, p. 25.
25 *Autobiography*, I, p. 345.

remarked to Miss Agatha Harrison, "The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists."[26] He wrote in 1940, "The end of non-violent 'war' is always an agreement, never dictation, much less humiliation of the opponent."[27] Thus the satyagrahi fights with a view to bilateral and not unilateral victory. He aims at the integration and not suppression of legitimate differences.

The aim indicates the method. Negatively, the satyagrahi should try to avoid violence in all forms. Violence seeks to destroy the opponent or at least to injure him, and this is not the way to convert or reform him. The satyagrahi should try to avoid all intentional injury to the opponent in thought, word and deed. Thus he should not harbour anger, hatred, ill-will, suspicion, vindictiveness or other similar divisive feelings. As regards speech, he should avoid all abusive, insulting, haughty, or needlessly offensive language. In his actions he should not rely on brute force, for to do so is to co-operate with the evil-doer and lend him support. In spite of all provocation the satyagrahi should not be intolerant and vindictive, and should not frighten the opponent. If assaulted, he should not prosecute his assailant, and he should not call in outsiders to assist him, for either course would mean that he is depending on physical force.

Positively, "A satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, *himsa* by *ahimsa*."[28] The satyagrahi, who is conscious of the working of soul-force and of his own spiritual kinship with the opponent, should treat the opponent as a member of his family. To wean the opponent from his error he should use the domestic method which makes the resolution of the conflict easy by minimizing differences and emphasizing points of agreement. Says Gandhiji, "I must apply the same rules to the wrong-doer who is my enemy as I would to my wrong-doing father or son."[29]

This is how Gandhiji describes the domestic method: "Family disputes and differences are generally settled according to the law of love. The injured member has so much regard for the

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[26] *H.*, April 29, 1939, p. 101.
[27] *H.*, March 23, 1940, p. 53.
[28] *Y. I.*, August 8, 1929.
[29] *Speeches*, p. 284.

others that he suffers injuries for the sake of his principles without retaliating and without being angry with those who differ from him. And as repression of anger, self-suffering are difficult processes, he does not magnify trifles into principles, but in all non-essentials readily agrees with the rest of the family, and thus contrives to gain the maximum of peace for himself without disturbing that of others. Thus his action, whether he resists or resigns, is always calculated to promote the common welfare of the family."[30]

The way to treat the opponent as a member of the family is to give him the same credit for honesty of purpose which the satyagrahi claims for himself.[31] "If you want to convert your opponent you must present to him his better and nobler side. Work on, round, and upon that side. Do not dangle his faults before him."[32] In 1940 he advised the Congressmen not to concentrate on showing the misdeeds of the Government, "for we have to convert and befriend those who run it. And after all no one is wicked by nature. And if others are wicked, are we the less so? That attitude is inherent in Satyagraha."[33] He should persistently trust the opponent even if he does not know him or has come to regard him as untrustworthy.[34] "Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit faith in human nature is the very essence of his creed."[35]

The technique of satyagraha in dyadic relations, on the analogy of domestic quarrels, includes persuasion and discussion, settlement of differences by one in whose judgment the two parties repose trust, non-co-operation, civil disobedience of the orders of the offender if he happens to be in exercise of authority, suffering of hardships that come as a result of this resistance, fasting, etc. All along the struggle should be clean and the satyagrahi must scrupulously stick to truth and *ahimsa*.

Devotion to truth demands that the satyagrahi should not be blind to the best in the evil-doer. To do full justice to the

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30 *Speeches*, p. 502.
31 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1319.
32 Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 17.
33 *H.*, March 30, 1940, p. 71.
34 *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 150.
35 *South Africa*, p. 246.

adversary he must try to keep his mind in a detached state, understand the adversary's point of view and, if necessary, revise his judgment.[36] The satyagrahi must always hold himself open to conviction, and whenever he discovers himself in the wrong he must confess his mistake at all costs and atone for it.[37] "As a satyagrahi I must always allow my cards to be examined and re-examined at all times and make reparation if an error is discovered."[38] The strength of the satyagrahi consists in his moral superiority over the opponent. Persistence in untruth means bartering away real strength for a false sense of prestige. "Confession of error," writes Gandhiji, "is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before.... Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path."[39]

The error of the opponent is due either to ignorance or selfishness and ill-will—though selfishness and ill-will are ultimately due to ignorance. The first step that the satyagrahi takes in a conflict, be it individual or collective, is persuasion, negotiation and discussion. If necessary he also agrees to arbitration by a third party. Thus the satyagrahi launches upon the extreme step not abruptly but only after gentler methods have failed.

It is just possible that desire and readiness for discussion may be lacking on the part of the adversary and so the stage of negotiations may never be reached. But if it is not, it must not be for the fault of the satyagrahi.[40] "The satyagrahi, whilst he is ever ready for fight, must be equally eager for peace. He must welcome any honourable opportunity for peace."[41] Even if the preliminary negotiations fail, the satyagrahi is always willing to utilize any opening for honourable settlement at every stage of the struggle. Indeed, he may go out of his way to knock at the adversary's door, for he is not deterred by false notions of prestige. Once in the non-violent struggle in South Africa Gandhiji, even though he had the least hope for a compromise,

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[36] *Y. I.*, II, pp. 227 and 1320; *Y. I.*, III, p. 387.
[37] *Autobiography*, II, p. 232.
[38] *H.*, March 11, 1939, p. 44.
[39] *Y. I.*, I, p. 996.
[40] *H.*, June 24, 1939, pp. 169-70 and 172.
[41] *Y. I.*, March 19, 1931, p. 40.

thrust himself on General Smuts. The General relented and Gandhiji's last effort was successful. In 1939 during the course of satyagraha for constitutional reforms in Travancore Gandhiji advised satyagrahis to open direct negotiations with the authorities instead of the two parties talking at each other and thus widening the differences. He wrote, "It would not do for a satyagrahi to argue that the approach must be mutual. That assumes the existence of the spirit of satyagraha in the authorities, whereas satyagraha is offered in respect of those who make no claim to be satyagrahis. Hence the first and the last work of a satyagrahi is ever to seek an opportunity for an honourable approach."[42] But though the satyagrahi is always ready for give and take and for a "voluntary surrender of non-essentials",[43] he would never compromise on the basic moral issues involved in the conflict. "My compromises," Gandhiji once remarked, "will never be at the cost of the cause or the country."[44] "Any compromise on fundamentals is a surrender. For it is all give and no take. The time for compromise can only come when both (parties) are of one mind on fundamentals."[45]

Critics in India found fault with Gandhiji for the great importance he always attached to efforts for compromise with the opponent. The policy of parleys and postponements, according to them, makes it appear that they are on the verge of compromise, soothes the satyagrahis and exhausts their energy so that when ultimately the conflict does come, the requisite atmosphere is lacking for it.

To Gandhiji, however, eagerness for compromise is an integral part of satyagraha. The satyagrahi, conscious of his spiritual kinship with the adversary, respects him as a human being and aims at peace. The exploration by him of all the legitimate avenues of peaceful settlement clearly brings out this objective of his. It shows that the satyagrahi has been compelled to the drastic step of direct action because there is left for him no honourable way out. This gives to satyagraha its essentially defensive character. It also wins for the satyagrahi the support of public opinion.

[42] *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 153.
[43] *Y. I.*, III, p. 1058.
[44] *H.*, March 30, 1940, p. 70.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Negotiation and compromise must come at some stage, at the end of the conflict at any rate. A recourse to them in the beginning may possibly save all concerned the strain involved in the conflict. Besides, the very insistence on truth which men always see in fragments and from different perspectives teaches the satyagrahi the need for compromise. "I am essentially a man of compromise," Gandhiji once said to Louis Fischer, "because I am never sure that I am right."[46] This is why to Gandhiji "full surrender of non-essentials is a condition precedent to accession of internal strength to defend the essential by dying."[47] So if the satyagrahi precipitates battle or bangs the door on negotiations, he puts himself in the wrong.

Eagerness for compromise in group satyagraha should not undermine the morale of satyagrahis. For all the time the leader and his lieutenants keep in close touch with the rank and file, educating them and explaining to them the significance of persuasion and effort for compromise in the strategy of non-violence. The success of violent revolutions depends on the working up of the divisive emotions of masses to a high tension point so as to cause an outburst and any talk of peace would be a fatal distraction to such a movement. But it is not so in satyagraha which seeks to arouse constructive, unifying sentiments, love for the adversary, non-retaliation and eagerness to suffer in order to serve. If efforts for compromise lead to demoralization, it is a sure sign of the absence of the real spirit of satyagraha. Even if the adversary is insincere and uses negotiations as a screen for his plans to consolidate his strength, the satyagrahi need not be worried. Real strength is moral superiority and, if all is well in the satyagrahi camp, the preparedness of the adversary is immaterial.[48]

Besides, it is always assumed that in the event of failure of negotiations the satyagrahi is ever ready to offer battle. "He needs no previous preparation, his cards are always on the table. Suspension or continuation of battle is one and the same thing to him. He fights or refrains from fighting to gain precisely the same end."[49]

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46 Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, p. 102.

47 *H.*, Nov. 10, 1940, p. 333.

48 *H.*, Feb. 17, 1940, p. 2.

49 *Y. I.*, April 16, 1931, p. 77.

Persuasion and discussion are essential both in relation to the adversary and public opinion. So the satyagrahi will in addition to constantly approaching the adversary also appeal to public opinion, educate it and state his case coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him.[50] Thus before resorting to direct action he will exhaust all other peaceful means of honourable settlement.

If the appeal to reason fails due to the wrong-doer's short-sightedness or selfishness, the only other way for the satyagrahi is to appeal to the opponent's heart. This the satyagrahi does by undertaking voluntary suffering.

Gandhiji attaches very great importance to suffering. He calls satyagraha "the law of suffering" and "*tapasya* for truth". He writes, "Nothing can shake me from the conviction that given a good cause, suffering for it advances it as nothing else has done."[51] "Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress."[52] "No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of suffering. Mother suffers so that her child may live. The condition of wheat-growing is that seed grain should perish. Life comes out of death."[53] Purity implies discipline and Gandhiji points out that mere sacrifice without discipline will be unavailing. The indication that one has acquired adequate discipline is that suffering should become a joy and the individual should begin to delight "in plunging headlong into the mouth of *himsa*".

There is no limit to the suffering that an act of satyagraha may entail. The satyagrahi must exercise restraint under the gravest provocation and cheerfully bear all sorts of losses and inconveniences—assaults, beating, excommunication, loss of property, even death. He must be willing to stake his all except honour.[54] And he must continue to stagger his opponent till his suffering strikes a responsive chord in the latter's heart and gradually converts him.

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50 *Y. I.*, III, p. 413.

51 *Y. I.*, II, p. 838.

52 *Y. I.*, I, p. 231.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 230.

54 *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236.

Nothing is of greater importance than suffering so far as the conversion of the opponent in vital matters is concerned. It plays a far greater part than reasoning and persuasion. To quote Gandhiji, "If you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of the reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man."[55] Again, "I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are agelong. . . .Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens up the eyes of understanding."[56]

But how does vicarious suffering redeem the evil-doer? How does it melt his heart and open up the inner understanding in him?

In a few passages scattered in his writings Gandhiji describes the working of satyagraha on individual and group scale and the way the conversion of the opponent is brought about by the suffering of the satyagrahi.

When the satyagrahi practises *ahimsa* and suffers voluntarily, his love, i.e., soul-force, develops tremendous potency, and due to the principle of spiritual unity he affects and elevates the entire environment and all people around him including the opponent. Says Gandhiji, "The more you develop it (non-violence) in your being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world."[57] "The greater our innocence the greater our strength and the swifter our victory."[58] "True fasting," he wrote in 1933, "generates a silent, unseen force which may, if it is of requisite strength and purity, pervade all mankind."[59] In a letter to a Delhi journalist who questioned the efficacy of non-violence in the modern materialistic world, Gandhiji wrote, "Do you not realize that when non-violence reigns, materialism takes a back seat, avenues are changed and in a non-violent war there is no waste of efforts, property or moral fibre?"[60]

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[55] *Nation's Voice*, p. 235.
[56] *Y. I.*, II, p. 1320.
[57] *H.*, January 28, 1939, p. 443.
[58] *Speeches*, p. 639.
[59] Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 94.
[60] Extracts from the letter published in the *Hindustan Times*, January 24, 1941.

Thus the purification of the suffering satyagrahi also cleanses and strengthens the spirit of the opponent. Similarly his love-force acts on and wins the sympathy and support of public opinion.

Gandhiji also explains the working of non-violence psychologically. "The strong in body in their insolence often mobilize their 'hard fibre'. . . . But when that 'hard fibre' comes in contact not with its like but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air."[61] "The wrong-doer wearies of wrong-doing in the absence of resistance. All pleasure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance."[62] Again, "I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him which recognition would not humiliate him but uplift him."[63] "It has been my invariable experience," he wrote in 1924, "that good works good, evil, evil, and that therefore, if the evil does not receive the corresponding response, it ceases to act, dies of want of nutrition. Evil can only live upon itself. . . The law acts with scientific precision."[64]

A very important psychological reason that Gandhiji gives for the effective working of satyagraha is that it affects the adversary unconsciously, and the unconscious effect of our actions is far greater than the conscious effect. "In violence there is nothing invisible. Non-violence on the other hand is three-fourths invisible and so the effect is in the inverse ratio to its invisibility. Non-violence, when it becomes active, travels

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61 *Speeches*, p. 711.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 639.

63 *Y. I.*, II, p. 864.

One of the secretaries of General Smuts said to Gandhiji towards the end of the South African struggle, "I often wish you took to violence like the English strikers, and then we would know at once how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even the enemy. You desire victory by self-suffering alone and never transgress your self-imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness." General Smuts also expressed similar sentiments. *South Africa*, p. 492.

64 *Y. I.*, May 15, 1924, p. 161.

with extraordinary velocity and then it becomes a miracle."[65] Thus the mind of the opponent is first affected unconsciously and then consciously. Conscious effect means conversion.

Gandhiji pointedly compares the silent, subtle, unseen working of non-violence to homoeopathic treatment. "Non-co-operation is not an allopathic treatment. It is homoeopathic. The patient does not taste the drops given to him. He is sometimes even incredulous, but if the homoeopaths are to be trusted, the tasteless drops or the tiny pills of homoeopathy are far more potent than the ounce-doses or choking pills of allopathy. I assure the reader the effect of purifying non-co-operation is more certain than the effect of homoeopathic medicine."[66]

Further, satyagraha is an unfailing remedy against all injustice and exploitation, for the latter presume the co-operation between the victim and the evil-doer. When this co-operation is withdrawn by the satyagrahi, the opponent is thwarted and rendered powerless. Thus referring to the relation between the tyrannical rulers and the satyagrahi ruled, Gandhiji remarked in 1917, "They (the rulers) know that they cannot effectively exercise force against the passive resister. Without his concurrence they cannot make him do their will."[67]

In short, the non-violence of the satyagrahi staggers the violent opponent and upsets his moral balance. The satyagrahi remains calm and unperturbed and does not retaliate. This exhausts the brute spirit of the opponent for want of nutrition.[68] His dynamic love and goodwill, his fearless interest in the moral welfare of the opponent and his attempt to discover and appeal to the best in him weaken the hostile feelings in the opponent. Gradually the latter becomes weary and ashamed of his violence, his generous emotions are aroused, he softens, responds and repents. The satyagrahi's eagerness for a just compromise makes the settlement of the dispute easy. If the wrong-doer is past remedy, he compasses his own end, for he finds himself isolated.[69]

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65 *H.*, March 20, 1937, pp. 41-42.

66 *Y. I.*, I, p. 988.

67 *Speeches*, p. 393.

68 *Y. I.*, I, p. 909.

69 *H.*, Dec. 16, 1939, p. 376.

But though suffering is an essential part of satyagraha,[70] there should be no eagerness on the part of the satyagrahi to be demonstrative and to strive after stage effect. To do so is to miss the very spirit of satyagraha and to take leave of one's humility. Gandhiji believes that the key to quick success is humility expressing itself in "silent and undemonstrative action of truth and love" and not showy performances.[71]

It is sometimes supposed that the satyagrahi forces the oppressor to be brutal to the last extreme and manoeuvres the opponent into being injurious.[72] With Gandhiji, however, suffering is merely a means to the conversion of the opponent and, according to him, brutalizing the adversary can but make his conversion the more difficult. Besides, due to the principle of spiritual unity, brutalization of the adversary will drag down the satyagrahi also. In fact, Gandhiji repeatedly insists that the aim of the satyagrahi is to prevent the brutalization of the opponent, and that the opponent should not be compelled to inflict punishment. "The secret of satyagraha lies in not tempting the wrong-doer to do wrong."[73] To the satyagrahi suffering, even death, is welcome but it should come unsought. "Let us all be brave enough to die the death of a martyr, but let no one lust for martyrdom."[74] In 1924 Gandhiji expressed his disapproval of Sikh satyagrahis inviting fire by resisting arrests.[75]

He explicitly warns the satyagrahi not to feed deliberately the provocation of the opponent[76] but to meet all the provocative and repressive measures of the opponent with exemplary self-restraint even at the risk of being charged with cowardice. He also feels that genuine satyagraha, being a spiritual exercise,

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70 "Whilst we must try always to avoid occasions for needless suffering, we must ever be ready for them. Somehow or other, those who will walk along the right path cannot avoid suffering notwithstanding the attempt to avoid it. It is the privilege of the patriot, the reformer and, still greater, of the satyagrahi." *Y. I.*, March 19, 1931, p. 41.

71 *Y. I.*, Aug. 8, 1929; *Y. I.*, I, p. 278.

72 See, for example, K. Shridharani, *War without Violence*, p. 265.

73 *Nation's Voice*, pp. 148-49; Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 16; *Conversations*, p. 43; *H.*, April 15, 1939, p. 87.

74 *Y. I.*, III, p. 20.

75 *Y. I.*, II, p. 838.

76 *H.*, March 2, 1940, p. 22.

can never provoke reprisals. It can evoke the best, not the worst, in man.[77] By 'the best' obviously he does not mean good temper. Indeed, in evoking the best the wrong-doer may have to be ruffled.

One of the important offshoots of satyagraha, and a form of suffering, is non-violent non-co-operation. It is "the expression of anguished love".[78] Non-co-operation is always undertaken with a view to co-operation after the opponent has been cured of his violence. Gandhiji once said to Miss Agatha Harrison, "Although non-co-operation is the main weapon in the armoury of satyagraha, it should not be forgotten that it is after all only a means to secure the co-operation of the opponent consistently with truth and justice."[79] He wrote in 1925, "Behind my non-co-operation there is always the keenest desire to co-operate on the slightest pretext even with the worst of opponents. To me, a very imperfect mortal, ever in need of God's grace, no one is beyond redemption."[80]

The idea that underlies non-co-operation is that even the evil-doer does not succeed in his purpose without carrying the victim with him, if necessary, by force, and that it is the duty of the satyagrahi to suffer for the consequences of resistance and not to yield to the will of the tyrant. If the victim continues to tolerate the wrong by passive acquiescence, if he enjoys benefits accruing from the wrong or the wrong-doer directly or indirectly, the victim is an accessory to the tyrant's misdeeds.

Non-co-operation can be violent also. But violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil. As evil can only be sustained by violence, non-co-operation must be non-violent. Non-co-operation also includes disobedience, in a civil manner, of the orders of the tyrant. But civil disobedience plays its important part in the corporate aspect of satyagraha and so we may postpone it to the next chapter.

Non-co-operation is a universal remedy applicable to problems of everyday life. It can be used even against intimate relations. Gandhiji writes, "If my son lives a life of shame, I may not help him to do so by continuing to support him. On the

[77] *H.*, March 27, 1939, pp. 143-44.

[78] *Y. I.*, I, p. 241.

[79] *H.*, April 29, 1939, p. 101.

[80] *Y. I.*, II, p. 517.

contrary my love for him requires me to withdraw all support from him although it may mean even his death. And the same love imposes on me the obligation of welcoming him to my bosom when he repents."[81]

Similarly, "If a father does an injustice it is the duty of his children to leave the parental roof. If the headmaster of a school conducts his institution on an immoral basis, the pupils must leave the school. If the chairman of a corporation is corrupt, the members thereof must wash their hands clean of his corruption by withdrawing from it; even so, if a Government does grave injustice, the subjects must withdraw co-operation wholly or partially sufficiently to wean the ruler from his wickedness. In each of the cases conceived by me there is an element of suffering whether mental or physical. Without such suffering it is not possible to attain freedom."[82]

When the wrong-doer can do even without the satyagrahi's co-operation, the object of satyagraha is self-purification. When a friend gives up another and a servant his master, they practise this mild variety of non-co-operation. On the other hand if the evil-doer cannot do without the satyagrahi's co-operation, non-co-operation assumes a drastic form. A father's giving up a dependent son is an instance. The drastic type of non-co-operation no doubt causes inconvenience and maybe even injury to the opponent. But all the while the object of the non-co-operator should be conversion and his weapon love. The drastic type of non-co-operation should be undertaken on grave issues. The inconvenience of the opponent must cause pain to the satyagrahi, and non-co-operation should bring to the satyagrahi suffering of some sort.[83] If the brunt of suffering has to be borne by the opponent rather than by the satyagrahi the presumption should be that it is a case of violent non-co-operation. The satyagrahi seeks truth by imposing suffering not on others but on himself.

Even while non-co-operating the satyagrahi must make the opponent feel that he has a friend in the former. The satyagrahi

[81] *Y. I.*, I, p. 247.

[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 234 and 300.

should also try to reach the opponent's heart by rendering him humanitarian service whenever possible.[84]

The ultimate and the most potent weapon in the armoury of satyagraha is fasting. Gandhiji calls it a fiery weapon,[85] and claims to have reduced it to a science.[86] Non-co-operation brings passive suffering inflicted by the opponent; fasting is suffering self-inflicted. As against non-co-operation, it is of strictly limited application, and the distinction between its use and misuse, between satyagrahi fasting and *duragrahi* fasting or hunger strike, is discernible with much greater difficulty than in the case of non-co-operation.

So delicate, indeed, is this spiritual weapon and so high the level of moral sensitiveness that it requires in a satyagrahi that even Gandhiji, the greatest authority on satyagraha, once made a mistake in its use. Thus regarding his Rajkot fast, which was in itself justified, Gandhiji later felt that he ought not to have sought the intervention of the British Government. This vitiated the fast as a means of converting the late Thakore of the State whom Gandhiji regarded, due to his old family connections, his son and whose breach of the plighted word had occasioned the fast. Later Gandhiji renounced the advantages gained as a result of this intervention.[87]

Fasting, as stated earlier, may be used as penance or purification for fuller self-expression, i.e., for the attainment of spirit's supremacy over the flesh.[88] It then refers to one's own mistakes and failings and is a great discipline and a most powerful factor in one's evolution. An instance is Gandhiji's five-day fast in February 1922 after Chaurichaura violence, undertaken for personal cleansing, as a prayer so that he may "become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere". Another instance is the purificatory fast of 21 days in May 1933 which Gandhiji described as a "heart prayer for purification of myself and my associates

[84] *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 327.

[85] *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 332.

[86] His statement to the Press, dated Sept. 21, 1932.

[87] It is wrong to suppose that Gandhiji undertook the Rajkot fast to obtain political rights for the people of Rajkot. Political rights would have been secured if the Thakore kept his word. But ethically the two objects stand far apart.

[88] See pp. 123-24 *supra*.

counter-violence. Even if the woman and her defender die in the effort, it will be a glorious death, for they will have done their duty.[140]

But this truly non-violent treatment of the criminal is not possible unless it springs from a sincere belief that the criminal and the satyagrahi are one and, therefore, it is better that the latter die at the hands of the former than that the ignorant criminal should die at the hands of the satyagrahi.[141]

To a Negro visitor's question as to how one should act if one's brother was lynched, Gandhiji replied as under:

"...I must not wish ill to these.... It may be that ordinarily I depend on the lynching community for my livelihood. I refuse to co-operate with them, refuse even to touch the food that comes from them, and I refuse to co-operate with even my brother Negroes who tolerate the wrong. That is the self-immolation I mean. Of course a mechanical act of starvation means nothing. One's faith must remain undimmed whilst life ebbs out minute by minute."[142]

It is unnecessary to give hypothetical cases and discuss how to deal with them, or even to refer to actual instances in the life of Gandhiji and others. Non-violence is the law of love, i.e., voluntary suffering and sacrifice of the highest type. It will not be difficult to know how exactly to act in a particular situation provided we are non-violent through and through. Says Gandhiji, "I know that when we have real non-violence in us a non-violent way out is bound, without effort, to occur to us when we find ourselves in a difficult situation."[143] The sign that one has developed real non-violence is that there must be within him an upwelling of love and pity towards the wrong-doer. "When there is that feeling it will express itself through some action. It may be a sign, a glance, even silence. But such, as it is, will melt the heart of the wrong-doer and check the wrong."[144]

But one does not become non-violent overnight for the mere wishing. The highest form of *ahimsa* presumes a thoughtful

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140 *Speeches*, pp. 385, 838-39; *H.*, Nov. 19, 1938, p. 344; *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 266.

141 *H.*, June 29, 1940, p. 184.

142 *H.*, March 19, 1936, p. 39.

143 *H.*, Feb. 17, 1940, p. 8.

144 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

training spread over a fairly long period. What is one to do before one has developed the courage of dying without killing? There may also be people who accept *ahimsa* only as a political expedient. What should be the attitude of such persons in face of danger to honour, life and property?

In 1922 Gandhiji saw nothing wrong in satyagrahis using violence in self-defence.[145] Indeed, he did not ask them to eschew violence in dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that might invade India.[146] The Gaya Congress passed a resolution permitting the Congress satyagrahis the use of force in self-defence. But later on he did not countenance the "non-violence of the weak". To those, however, who had not yet learnt the superior method of non-violent self-defence, he advised the use of force in self-defence, i.e., killing and being killed rather than shamefully fleeing from danger. In chapter III we have discussed why Gandhiji preferred violence where the only alternative was cowardice. On many occasions his advice to individuals and groups was that, if they are incapable of non-violent defence, i.e., self-immolation, and are face to face with opponents bent on ruining their life, self-respect or honour, they should, rather than submit to the wrong, use physical strength, if necessary, to the point of killing the wrong-doer. This is the advice he generally gave to people in cases of police excesses and communal riots. In fact, he considers it the condition of democracy that every citizen should know the art of self-defence.[147] For if a citizen cannot stake his life to defend his own self-respect, he would be far less ready to stake it for the defence of democracy against internal and external dangers.

Gandhiji also believes that spontaneous violent resistance offered against overwhelming might in the full knowledge that it means certain death is almost non-violent.[148] Thus, if a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, or if a woman uses her nails and teeth in defence of her honour, the conduct would be almost non-violent.[149]

145 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1075; *Speeches*, p. 719.
146 *Y. I.*, II, p. 31.
147 *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 446.
148 *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 274.
149 *H.*, Aug. 25, 1940, p. 261.

There would, however, be no occasion for violent self-defence when police aid is available.[150] Besides, when force is used it should not be more than needed on the occasion. Self-defence should never be cowardly, crude or secret.[151] "It is invariably a sign of cowardice and madness to use excessive force. A brave man does not kill a thief but arrests him and hands him over to the police. A braver man uses just enough force to drive him out and thinks no more about it." Of course, the bravest man is he who can deal with the criminal non-violently.

The methods discussed in this chapter have their risks and uncertainties due to the weakness and imperfections of satyagrahis. Thus individual satyagraha may become *duragraha* in two ways. Suffering may be coercive and violent from the very start. It may be for stage effect or for some other unworthy object. In such a case the resister will lack the moral strength that truth alone gives and will in all probability not be able to persevere for long. Another possibility is that the opponent, instead of being converted, may be compelled to yield against his reason because he has not the strength to stand hostile public opinion or the sight of suffering. And the dearer the satyagrahi to the opponent, the greater is this risk. Gandhiji himself writes referring to non-co-operation, "Its abuse is the greatest in domestic relations because those against whom it is used are not strong enough to resist the abuse. It becomes a case of misapplied affection. Doting parents or wives are the greatest victims. These will learn wisdom when they realize that affection does not demand yielding to extortion in any form. On the contrary true affection will resist it."[152] Still another possibility is that the satyagrahi may tire of his suffering.

But every human device is liable to misuse. Satyagraha as the way of life should be judged by its net results. It should be borne in mind that efforts to eliminate violence from personal life form an inevitable first step to the establishment of genuine democracy and world peace and to the successful use of non-violent direct action on a mass scale. Besides, non-violence gives to the individual character and strength. It is an invaluable discipline for acquiring self-mastery or personal *swaraj*. As

150 *H.*, July 20, 1935, p. 181.
151 *H.*, Sept. 8, 1946, p. 296.
152 *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 133.

Gandhiji puts it, "....A perfect satyagrahi has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. Thus viewed satyagraha is the noblest and the best education...the greater the spirit of satyagraha in us the better men we will become...it is a force which, if it become universal, would revolutionize social ideals...."[153]

Violence always leads to counter-violence and cannot be a lasting solution of the conflict. The defeated nurses the grudge and waits for a suitable opportunity to wreak vengeance. Violence thus creates greater evils than it seeks to cure. It arouses the beastliest passions of man and leads on from injustice to injustice. Non-violence seeks to re-direct these divisive propensities into creative channels. It raises the conflict from the destructive physical to the constructive moral level. Suffering love paralyzes mere physical force, conciliates the opponent and leads to a settlement satisfactory to both the sides and in keeping with their self-respect. Gandhiji calls satyagraha an all-sided sword; for "it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used."[154] It is available to either side in the conflict and will vindicate truth and justice on whichever side they are in a preponderating measure.[155] It thus carries its own automatic check against misuse. What will happen, it may be asked, if two satyagrahis differ on a vital problem? Most probably satyagraha would not reach the stage of suffering, the differences being resolved at the preliminary stage of persuasion. In any case truth will prevail in the end.

On the whole, the destructive method of violence is no substitute for satyagraha. The latter may work slow, but it does settle the conflict and establish the right even as the former perpetuates antagonisms and, often enough, establishes the wrong.

It has been suggested that non-violence is, so far as theoretical merits are concerned, the most just and powerful weapon conceivable in human affairs. In actual practice, however, it is too idealistic and exacting to accomplish the everyday work of the world, as it "demands a stronger self-control, a more enduring solidarity of purpose, a greater capacity for passive

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153 *Y. I.*, III, p. 445.

154 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 72.

155 *Y. I.*, I, p. 52.

suffering, a higher ethical development than most human beings have thus far attained."[156] This is an opinion very widely held by people in India as well as outside.

Gandhiji, however, holds that "The weapon of *ahimsa* does not require supermen and superwomen to wield it; beings of common clay can use and have used it before this with success."[157] It does presume a moral discipline, but this discipline, as we have discussed in chapter V, is practicable. Besides, once the desirability of satyagraha is conceded, it is too late in the day to take one's stand on imperfections of human nature. Few will question the enormous malleability of man. Revolutions bear testimony to the great plasticity of human nature. The long list of evils like slavery, human sacrifice, infanticide, etc., which were once considered irremovable due to imperfections of human nature and have now disappeared, should convince the sceptics. If Fascist countries can train people *en masse* to regard war as good in itself, surely peace-loving nations can, with equal or even greater effort, educate people in the way of peace.[158] Perhaps it may take a very long time to convince people and to induce them to change their outlook, but time is not of the essence. What matters is conviction and sincere effort in the correct direction. If just a few persons actually begin to live non-violently, the non-violent way will spread among the masses. Every possible means, it is true, should be explored and utilized. Efforts should be made to reconstruct the entire structure of society. Gandhiji is conscious that it is far easier to educate children along proper lines than to change adults. For the establishment of peace in the world and for the elimination of war we have to begin with children. He attaches very great importance to the elementary training of children in

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[156] C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, pp. 406-07.

[157] *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 198.

[158] G. M. Stratton's conclusion is that both violence and co-operation are alike natural; that nature leaves undetermined the special acts by which the two kinds of impulse shall be carried out; that the malleable violent and co-operative activities are shaped and finished by social needs and purposes; and that common life requires that co-operation be steadied and extended and that violence which obstructs co-operation be prevented from disrupting or impeding it. See "Violence between Nations and Violence within the Nation" in *Psychological Review*, 1944, 51, pp. 85-101 and 147-61.

satyagraha preceding literary education.[159] He believes that even before literary education the child should be taught what soul is, what truth is, what love is and how in the struggle of life it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth and violence by self-suffering.[160] In the scheme of Basic Education he has tried to revolutionize the system of education and to give it a non-violent bias.

Though Gandhiji does not neglect the social approach, the first step is the transparently non-violent lives of those convinced, however small their number. Thus in 1936 when asked by Dr. Thurman as to how to train individuals and communities in this art, Gandhiji replied, "There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course the expression in one's life presumes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities."[161]

In theory, no doubt, Gandhiji is an absolutist, that is, his non-violence does not stop at man but reaches out to the tiniest creature living, and he believes that, ideally speaking, every situation of life can be dealt with non-violently. "A fully non-violent person is by nature incapable of using violence or rather has no use for it. His non-violence is all-sufficing under all circumstances."[162] In actual practice, he is far from strict and makes ample concessions to demands of human weakness. He concedes *himsa* as unavoidable in certain conditions. Unlike Tolstoy, the Quakers and many other pacifist Christian sects, he permits the satyagrahi even to kill in certain situations. He believes that every individual should determine for himself how far he is willing to go in the practice of *ahimsa*. He prefers violence to cowardice and slavery and advises people to fight like sportsmen rather than run away in craven fear. Thus, in spite of being an absolutist in theory, Gandhiji does retain a minimum of coercion indispensable for individual life and social cohesion.[163]

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159 C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 200.

160 *Y. I.*, III, pp. 445-46.

161 *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 39.

162 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

163 For details see chapters III, V and XI.

CHAPTER VIII

SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION[1]

THE LEADER, ORGANIZATION AND PROPAGANDA

"Non-violence," Gandhiji once remarked, "is not an individual virtue but a course of spiritual and political conduct both for the individual and the community."[2] Group conflicts, like conflicts in dyadic relations, are due to the relative nature of truth as known to man as well as other human imperfections. In group relations, even more than in individual life, conflicts and violence have become chronic today and threaten the very existence of civilized life. In satyagraha Gandhiji has given to the world a technique for fighting, in a creative, constructive way, aggression and exploitation in group relations.

Satyagraha as corporate action raises complicated questions of leadership, organization, discipline, training and strategy. Satyagraha is essentially a matter of quality rather than quantity and its use even in group affairs would not be difficult, if there could be found a few or even one perfect satyagrahi. One perfect satyagrahi, Gandhiji has repeatedly said, is enough to win the battle of right against wrong. He can "defy the whole might of an unjust empire...and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or regeneration."[3] "Complete non-violence ...does not stand in need of organized strength. A man or woman who is saturated with *ahimsa* has only to will a thing and it happens."[4] In the first article Gandhiji wrote for the *Indian Opinion* he said that "if after all there was one true man in South Africa he will cover all. He will build up the whole structure from within."[5] This belief of Gandhiji follows from his views about the limitless potency of soul-force. But such perfection, such marvellous control over thought and will is not possible for man. Even if it were possible, its greatest utility

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1 Gandhiji often terms satyagraha on group-scale as corporate non-violence.

2 *H.*, Sept. 29, 1940, p. 299.

3 *Y. I.*, I, p. 262.

4 *H.*, August 18, 1940, p. 253.

5 *H.*, May 19, 1946, p. 134.

would be as an instrument of educating the masses into satyagraha.[6] "In this age of democracy, however, it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength."[7] Besides, "Anything that millions can do together becomes charged with a unique power."[8] As it is, mass movements are essential, and with patience and perseverance masses have to be organized and disciplined for the use of collective non-violent technique.

The leader is the very soul of mass satyagraha. Great movements need great leaders for the psychological reason that most people find it easier to think in terms of personalities than of ideas. They crave a personal leader even as they need a personal God.[9] A personal leader is even a greater necessity in satyagraha than in other great movements. For it is only by the impact of the dynamic personality of the leader, truth and non-violence in flesh and blood, that ordinary human material can rise to the level of ethical excellence necessary for the practice of mass satyagraha.

The satyagrahi leader will try to live up to all the implications of truth and non-violence. His transparent sincerity and all-embracing love, culture and dignified bearing will win the devoted affection and the unquestioning obedience of his followers, disarm all opposition and endear him even to his adversary. His control over all the senses will give him creative energy of the highest order. It will give power to his word and make his controlled thought self-acting.[10] His complete selflessness born of the pursuit of non-possession will make him proof against self-seeking opportunism and enable him to feel one with the humblest camp-follower. Firmly rooted in the soil of his country and saturated with the spirit of *swadeshi*, he will represent the best in the culture and tradition of his people. His faith in God and his clear grasp of the basic moral principles will make him a matchless general and an unfailing strategist.

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[6] *Sarvodaya* (Hindi), April 1940, p. 426.
[7] *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 277.
[8] *H.*, April 7, 1946, p. 72.
[9] G. D. H. and Margaret Cole, *A Guide to Modern Politics*, pp. 348-49.
[10] *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.

The leader prepares the masses for the use of satyagraha in the sense of direct action as well as in its constructive aspect. The sure test of his success is that satyagrahis working under him should take as much interest in the arduous and exacting task of constructive activities as in the spectacular aspect of direct action and should be able to change from the one to the other with ease and effectiveness. The greatest tribute to the success of the satyagrahi leader would be for some of his followers to excel him in non-violence.[11]

A leader like Gandhiji asserts himself by sheer moral force. But for training sub-leaders and workers the best means is an ancient Indian institution, the *ashram*.[12]

Here due to the constant living contact between the teacher and the taught over a long period in the ideal atmosphere the message of non-violence is indelibly stamped on the inmates. In the common life of the *ashram* the leader and his disciples cultivate non-violent virtues. The way the leader lives and deals with the day to day problems of the institution is a concrete, living lesson in satyagraha that no mere written or spoken word will ever supplant. *Ashrams* thus become the vital nerve centres of the non-violent movement and the nuclei of the new social order. Through them the message of non-violence filters down to the masses. *Ashrams* serve as research institutions for the discovery of new applications of non-violence and train people to die, if necessary, in the pursuit of truth.[13]

After the discovery of satyagraha Gandhiji fixed up his abode in *ashrams*, pursuing his *sadhana* there and drawing his inspiration from the natural setting of his surroundings.[14] By *ashram* Gandhiji means collective religious life. *Ashram* in this sense was a part of his nature. Ever since he set up an independent household, it had been like an *ashram*. Its purpose was religion and not indulgence. And it included, besides the members of the family, some friend or other whose relation to the

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11 *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.

12 In ancient India *ashrams* were forest retreats where seers and sages preached and practised the ways of self-realization.

13 *Ashram*, p. 61 and 89.

14 Mahadev Desai's article, "How Does Mr. Gandhi Live?" in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, March 31, 1940.

family was religious in nature.[15] Gandhiji once remarked: "Whatever institution I touch, I end by converting it into an *ashram*—I seem to know nothing else."[16] There has grown up a large number of satyagraha *ashrams* in various parts of India. These are in most cases run by Gandhiji's disciples and have been modelled after the Sabarmati Ashram which was disbanded by Gandhiji in 1933.

A satyagraha mass movement requires not only the leader, his co-workers and lieutenants but also an enduring organization. Gandhiji tried to mould the Indian National Congress according to the requirements of satyagraha. But the Congress is not what he liked it to be. We may briefly study how far during his lifetime the Congress fell short of the ideal non-violent organization of Gandhiji's conception.

Before Gandhiji's entry into Indian politics the Congress was an organization of upper middle class leaders with little contact with the masses. It met once a year in some big town and its politics ranged between resolutions and deputations of prayers and protests. It was thus mainly a deliberative organization concerned with the formation of opinion rather than with action. Gandhiji transformed the Congress into a revolutionary mass organization.

Under his leadership the object of the Congress had been to identify itself with the masses, to educate and discipline them and to fight non-violently for their rights. According to him, the means of a non-violent organization should be truthful and non-violent. But, in spite of his repeated pleading, the Congress stuck to the adjectives 'peaceful' instead of 'non-violent' and 'legitimate' in place of 'truthful'. With Gandhiji non-violence had always been a creed and not a policy. In 1919 under Gandhiji's advice the Congress accepted non-violence as a policy only, i.e., for the restricted purpose of winning *swaraj* and regulating relations between various religious and social groups in the country. He had hoped that many would accept non-violence as their creed after they had watched its working.[17] But, though he preached non-violence as a policy, he

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[15] *Ashram*, p. 3.

[16] *H.*, Sept. 1, 1946, p. 291.

[17] *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192; June 24, 1939, p. 175.

insisted that "even policies require honest adherence in thought, word and deed....Non-violence being a policy means that it can upon due notice be given up when it proves unsuccessful or ineffective. But simple morality demands that, whilst a particular policy is pursued, it must be pursued with all one's heart."[18] He said, "Our non-violence need not be of the strong but it has to be of the truthful."[19]

In 1933 Gandhiji came to be convinced that non-violence to be effective should be accepted not as a halting measure of expediency but as a comprehensive principle. The Congress, however, continued to lag behind Gandhiji's standard. The difference came to a head in 1940 due to the last war. By its Delhi and Poona resolutions (July 7th and 27th, 1940) the Congress absolved Gandhiji of his leadership and, going back on its past professions of non-violence, promised to Britain its active co-operation in the war effort in case Britain recognized India's independence. But its offer was rejected. Thereupon by its Bombay resolution (16th Sept. 1940) the Congress once again accepted Gandhiji's leadership and pledged itself to "the policy and practice of non-violence not only in the struggle for *swaraj*, but also, in so far as this may be possible of application, in free India" and to give a lead to the world in disarmament.[20] Non-violence was still a policy with the Congress which, however, advanced from the earlier position and accepted it in a more comprehensive sense than before. Gandhiji believed that "so long as it (the Congress) clings to non-violence, it will be uncrushable and unconquerable."[21] In independent India the Congress functions as a political party in charge of the Government of the country. Having practised non-violence of the weak for about three decades it has not been able to deal non-violently with communal disturbances in India and Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir.

In the Congress organization Gandhiji welcomed the existence of groups and well-informed, balanced criticism

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[18] *Y. I.*, I, pp. 282-83.

[19] *Y. I.*, I, p. 288.

[20] The A.I.C.C. resolution, Sept. 16, 1940. *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 296. Gandhiji's reply to *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, dated July 15,1943.

[21] *H.*, Nov. 13, 1937, p. 33.

which he considered to be the "ozone of public life".[21] The various groups within this organization, he held, should be knit together by their common devotion to truth and non-violence. They should not be irreconcilables, and their differences should concern neither the end nor the means but the details of the means employed on a particular occasion.

Decision in a non-violent organization should be taken in the democratic way, and the opinion of the majority should count. Gandhiji, however, did not accept the logic of counting heads and forcing big minorities on important questions. Non-violence rules out the tyranny of the majority and requires that minorities should be treated with all consideration. Thus in regard to the Congress he wrote, "I have always held that when a respectable minority objects to any rule of conduct, it would be dignified for the majority. . .to yield to the minority. Numerical strength savours of violence when it acts in total disregard of any strongly felt opinion of a minority. The rule of the majority is perfectly sound, only when there is no rigid insistence on the part of dissenters upon their dissent, and where there is on their behalf a sportsmanlike obedience to the opinion of the majority."[22] But this does not mean the divine right of the minority to *liberum* veto. "Where there is no principle involved and there is a programme to be carried out the minority has got to follow the majority."[23]

Thus ordinarily the policy should be decided by the majority vote, but the dissent of the minority should be reckoned with when the question voted upon is one of principle.[24]

As for a non-violent minority group, it should render full co-operation and willing obedience to the organization. But if it does not believe in the basic principles of the organization, it should withdraw from it and try to convert people to its view by patient service and sacrifice. Even when it withdraws, it should continue to co-operate with the majority wherever possible. Remaining in the group and yet pursuing a policy of opposition and obstruction offends against the spirit of satyagraha. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1922, "If we are going to evolve

21 *H.*, Nov. 13, 1937, p. 33.
22 *Y. I.*, III, p. 212.
23 *H.*, August 11, 1940, p. 244.
24 *Y. I.*, I, p. 1017.

the real spirit of democracy, we shall not do so by obstruction but by abstention." Mere obstruction is negative and destructive and aims at capturing power by embarrassment and manoeuvring while non-violence is positive and constructive and aims at conversion through service.

On the occasion of elections or voting, the various groups in the organization may adopt all honest means for influencing voters, but undue pressure should not be exercised and there should be no criticism of the opposite groups as distinguished from their policy.[25] In 1924 when there was a tussle in the Congress between the Swarajists and the No-changers, Gandhiji advised the latter not to be party-men. He remarked, "Wherever No-changers cannot have a majority without a bitter struggle, they must gladly and willingly and gracefully yield to the Swarajists. If they have power or office, it must be by virtue of service, not by manipulation of the vote. The vote is there no doubt. But it must come, without the asking."[26] He said in 1939, "Non-violence does not seize power. It does not even seek power—power accrues to it."[27] Thus there should be no room, in a non-violent organization, for power-politics, for manoeuvring for the capture of party-machinery or retaining hold over it.

In this respect also the Congress often lagged behind Gandhiji's ideal. After 1937 the compactness and the homogeneity of the Congress was unduly strained by the rise of groups which had no faith in the creed and the constructive programme of the Congress. Their presence in the Congress, in spite of these differences, was due to the fact that association with the Congress lent strength to their appeal to the masses. These groups sometimes followed obstructionist policy, and Gandhiji once expressed the opinion that if these groups did not yield to persuasion the best course for the majority was to hand over the Congress machinery to them and work the Congress programme without using the Congress name.[28]

The Congress failed to rise to Gandhiji's expectations in regard to membership also, for it attached importance to

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25 *Y. I.*, II, p. 885.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 15.

28 *H.*, Oct. 15, 1938, p. 287.

vastness at the cost of depth. Gandhiji believed that internal corruption in the Congress had been an important cause of the failure of satyagraha. "Stubborn and implacable resistance against internal corruption," he wrote as early as 1922, "is enough resistance against the Government."[29] For about three years before the anti-war satyagraha of 1940-41 corruption in the Congress organization had been the burden of many of Gandhiji's speeches and articles. When the Congress accepted office in the provinces in 1937, many of the risks associated with its membership disappeared. Consequently many undesirables entered the Congress to exploit the influence and power that had accrued to it. There began an unholy scramble for its elective posts. Membership registers were disfigured by false entries. Even violence was resorted to at the time of party elections. In the excitement of legislative activity the constructive programme was neglected, and discipline became lax. The Congress had occasionally to take stern action against corruption and indiscipline. Withdrawal of the Congress from the work of administration and the launching of direct action in 1940 resulted in a large measure of clean-up, and by the beginning of 1942 it regained its strength. Since 1946 there have again been complaints of widespread corruption and indiscipline in the Congress.

Before India became free the Congress worked in a twofold capacity. It had some peace functions which related to its internal growth and administration. For these it was as good a democratic organization as any in the world. But for twenty-five years the Congress had been engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the mighty British Empire. Thus the Congress was also a fighting organization, a non-violent army. War, even war without violence, seriously impairs democracy. For in times of war the ordinary democratic processes of persuasion, discussion and counting of votes have to be subordinated to the demands of quick action, discipline and unity of command.

The Congress continued to work as an army even during the suspension of civil disobedience. For the suspension of civil disobedience did not mean suspension of war. As a fighting machine the Congress had to centralize control and guide every

29 *Y. I.*, I, p. 264.

department and every Congressman, however highly placed, and expect unquestioned obedience.[30] Gandhiji wrote in 1939, "The central authority possesses plenary powers enabling it to impose and enforce discipline on the various units working under it."[31]

During civil disobedience, according to Gandhiji, the will of the Congress was expressed by its general whoever he may be. "Every unit has to tender him willing obedience in thought, word and deed. Yes, even in thought, since the fight is non-violent."[31]

Thus whenever the Congress declared "war" against the Government, it invested Gandhiji with full powers of a dictator. In 1930, Gandhiji gave an important reason why non-violent direct action should not be controlled by a democratic organization like the Congress. The Congress consisted of people of a variety of mentalities. To some non-violence was a matter of policy and expediency, to others a creed. "The instinct of those, therefore, with whom non-violence is a policy, when tempted by violence, may fail them. That of those who have no remedy but non-violence open to them can never fail them if they have non-violence in them in reality. Hence the necessity for freedom from Congress control."[31a]

But this was dictatorship only in name. It lasted only for the duration of civil disobedience. It was democratic in origin, for it was voluntarily adopted by the Congress. Further, the obedience of the rank and file was entirely voluntary and could be withdrawn at their will. Besides, as the movement of civil disobedience developed important leaders were imprisoned, and the Congress was declared illegal. Congress committees ceased to function and delegated their powers to local dictators. The movement then became decentralized and self-regulated. In fact, Gandhiji expected leadership to be so thoroughly decentralized that every satyagrahi should be both chief and follower.[32] In a revolutionary movement a more democratic arrangement is hardly possible. Thus the Congress combined effective

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30 *H.*, Aug. 6, 1938, p. 209.

31 *H.*, Nov. 18, 1939, p. 344.

31a *Y. I.*, Feb. 2, 1930.

32 *History of the Congress*, p. 657.

leadership, concentration of power and fighting efficiency with democracy.

This dictatorship, just because it was dictatorship, may be mistaken for being Fascistic. But the two are poles apart. Fascism is based on violence. The Congress, on the other hand, was a non-violent organization. It did not impose its will on others and had only moral sanctions. Thus as the only purely non-violent organization of importance in the world the Congress was the very antithesis of Fascism. The smallest minority group in the Congress could resist the unjust majority non-violently and thus safeguard its rights.

That the Congress did not believe in "leader-worship" is amply borne out by Gandhiji's repeated withdrawal from the Congress. In July 1940 the Congress went so far as to absolve him of his leadership. Gandhiji's influence over the Congress, which was often exaggerated, was purely moral. "My opinion," he says, "prevails only to the extent that I carry conviction. Let me give out the secret that often my advice makes no appeal to the members."[33]

One reason why the Congress was sometimes mistaken for being Fascistic is the discipline that it tried to maintain. We have explained why the Congress had to resort to disciplinary action against recalcitrants in order to root out corruption and indiscipline. After all the existence of even a voluntary organization presumes a minimum of allegiance to common principles and modes of action.

Though only a part of India's population was represented on the Congress register, it claimed, by the right of service, to speak for and aspired to represent the entire nation. In the past it also aimed at being an all-inclusive organization. This was due to its being the spearhead of Indian nationalism, a kind of national front. As Gandhiji once remarked, "Absorption is inevitable when a country is engaged in a struggle to wrest power from foreign hands; it cannot afford to have separate rival political organizations. The entire strength of the country must be used for ousting the third and usurping party."[34]

The Congress had its defects and failings. But it was in the words of Gandhiji, "the only organization, however imperfect,

[33] *H.*, Aug. 12, 1939, p. 233.
[34] *H.*, Dec. 31, 1938, p. 410.

however wanting in faith as an organization, still the only organization that stands defiantly for peaceful measures."[35] No other organization practised non-violent resistance on such a large scale. Nowhere else was a dictatorship so democratic in character, origin and working.

Gandhiji tried to mould the structure of the Congress so as to make it a democratic revolutionary organization and to bring within its orbit of service and influence the 7,00,000 of India's villages. He believed that it had progressed from stage to stage in its march towards democracy in the true sense of the term.

In his conception of democracy Gandhiji was not obsessed with large, unwieldy numbers that make for corruption and hypocrisy. As he wrote in 1934, "True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent."[36] Let not "the claim to represent" sound undemocratic. In a non-violent organization, which depended on voluntary obedience and moral sanctions, the "claim to represent" means no more than the right to serve and to suffer for the common good. If Gandhiji had his way, "the Congress would be reduced to the smallest compass possible. It would consist of a few chosen servants removable at the will of the nation but getting the willing cooperation of the millions in the programme they may put before the nation."[37]

In 1920 he gave to the Congress a new constitution. In 1934 he advocated important changes in the constitution, many of which were accepted by the Bombay session of the Congress (1934). The constitution of 1934 as amended from time to time, particularly in 1939, determined the structure of the Congress until 1948.

According to this constitution the Indian National Congress comprised:

(1) Primary members enrolled in the Congress Committees and paying annas four annually;

(2) Village, Ward, Town, Taluka (Tahsil or Subdivision), District or other local committees;

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[35] Gandhiji's statement dated April 21, 1941.

[36] Gandhiji's statement dated Sept. 17, 1934.

[37] *H.*, Aug. 12, 1939, p. 232.

(3) Provincial Congress Committees;

(4) Annual Session of the Congress consisting of the President of the Congress and the delegates for the year;

(5) All India Congress Committee; and

(6) Working Committee.

The delegates were elected by the primary members, each district being entitled to elect one delegate for each lakh of its population, provided that for every delegate to be elected there were not less than 500 primary members enrolled during the year.

The delegates of a province formed the Provincial Congress Committee. They elected from among themselves one-eighth of their number, as representatives of the province, to the All India Congress Committee. In the presidential election held every year the right of vote belonged to delegates only. The Working Committee consisted of the President and fourteen members appointed by the President from amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee. The Working Committee was the executive authority of the Congress and carried into effect the policy laid down by the A.I.C.C. to which it was responsible.

Gandhiji was conscious that the Congress was becoming a weedy and unwieldy growth. Towards the close of his life he suggested how it might be reformed so that it might be able to win "economic, social, and moral freedom" for the country and not get lost into "ungainly skirmish for power". These suggestions are embodied in a memorandum in Hindi given by him to the Constitution Committee of the Congress on 1st January 1946,[38] in an article entitled "Congress Position"[39] and lastly in the draft constitution for the Congress which he wrote on 29th January 1948 and which is known as his "last will and testament to the nation".[40] We give the last of these as the first appendix to this chapter. Gandhiji suggested that in its present form, i.e., as a propaganda and parliamentary machine the Congress had outlived its use. The existing Congress organization should disband itself and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh.

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38 For an English translation of this memorandum see N. V. Rajkumar, *Development of the Congress Constitution*, Appendix II.

39 *H.*, Feb. 1, 1948, p. 4 .

40 *H.*, Feb. 15, 1948, p. 32.

The Sangh should be a body of servants of the nation engaged in constructive work, mostly in villages, to achieve social, moral, and economic freedom. It should be organized democratically from the bottom upwards. Five adult constructive workers should form a unit. Two contiguous *panchayats* should elect a leader. Fifty first-grade leaders should elect a second-grade leader and so on till they covered the entire country.

After Gandhiji's passing away his suggestions could not be accepted by the Congress leaders. The Congress adopted a new constitution in 1948 which has been amended in important respects since then. The aim of the Congress under the present constitution, is "the establishment in India, by peaceful and legitimate means, of a Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth based on equality of opportunity and of political, economic and social rights and aiming at world peace and fellowship." The Working Committee now consists of twenty members. Members of the Congress are of two kinds, i.e., primary members as before and active members. The latter pay a higher subscription and are required to devote regularly a part of their time to some form of public service "otherwise than for personal profit". Active members alone can contest elections for important posts in the Congress. Members of the Congress are debarred from membership of any political or communal party with a separate membership, constitution and programme. The term of various Congress Committees is two years.

During Gandhiji's lifetime the Congress was closely associated with several constructive organizations. The Gandhi Seva Sangh, a body of nine satyagraha experts, was a research organization for exploring the possibilities of *ahimsa* in all walks of life, particularly for "the observation, study and research in the subject of relation of constructive work to *ahimsa* and of reaction of such work on the individual and society."[41] The Sangh worked under Gandhiji's guidance and was independent of the Congress. The constructive work has also other independent organizations of experts. The important among these are the All India Spinners' Association, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the All India Village Industries Association,

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[41] The resolution of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, 1940 session. *H.*, March 2, 1940, p. 24.

the Hindustani Talimi Sangh and the Goseva Sangh. In 1945 a Co-ordination Committee (Sammiliti Samiti) was formed of five members representing these five constructive organizations which owed allegiance to Gandhiji's philosophy. The Committee which was an advisory body worked under the guidance of Gandhiji. Its main function was to act as a watch and ward committee in regard to constructive work and point out deviations from the principle of non-violence. It was also to guide and co-ordinate the activities of these organizations. The Committee, however, could not work satisfactorily.[42]

In March 1948, representatives of eleven constructive institutions decided to federate into 'Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh'. The Sangh was to guide and co-ordinate their activities.[43] Later on under the impact of the Bhumidan movement the principal constructive institutions with their headquarter at Wardha merged in the Sangh to work as its departments. In March 1948, a conference of constructive workers was also held at Sevagram. It established the Sarvodaya Samaj "to strive towards a society based on truth and non-violence in which there will be no distinction of caste or creed, no opportunity for exploitation and full scope for development both for individuals as well as groups." It is a loose organization; the bond bringing together units being common faith in the teachings of Gandhiji. Any person who has faith in his teachings and tries to give expression to them by engaging in some form of constructive work is eligible for the membership of the Samaj. It meets annually to enable the members to exchange ideas and share each other's experiences.

In Gandhiji's time the Congress had also its volunteer organization named Qaumi Seva Dal. It had its periodical rallies and training camps, its drill, uniform and national songs. Volunteers, Gandhiji always insisted, should be recruited with discrimination. In order to keep out all but men of sterling character volunteers were required to sign a pledge and accept the non-violent discipline.

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42 *H.*, March 6, 1949, p. 7.

43 These eleven institutions are: A.I.S.A., A.I.V.I.A., Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Goseva Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust, Navajivan Trust, Nature Cure Trust, Hindustani Mazdoor Sangh and Western India Adivasi Workers' Federation.

Gandhiji held that poor volunteers, devoting all their time to national service, should accept a minimum allowance for their maintenance.[44] During 1935-36 he asked the volunteers carrying on village work to depend for their minimum requirements on the villages they served, though the ideal of bread-labour required that one should be able to earn for one's own needs and devote one's spare time to national service.[45] Dependence of a village worker on the village he serves is a sign that his service is acceptable to the village and that the latter reposes its confidence in him and is ready to meet his legitimate needs. In 1945 with Gandhiji's approval the A.I.S.A. decided that in view of high price-level a worker engaging in the all-round village service (*samagra gramasewa*) should be paid up to rupees one hundred as monthly allowance according to the size of his family. This allowance was to be reduced by twenty per cent per annum. At the end of five years the worker was to become self-supporting and to depend for his maintenance on the support of the village, his own physical labour and the modest savings from village industries started by him in the area.

The function of volunteers was to train the masses for satyagraha. In times of direct action they formed the vanguard of the non-violent forces and gave tone and discipline to raw recruits. In peace time they served the masses by carrying on constructive activities. They also organized and regulated meetings, processions and *hartals* (suspension of business).[46]

As village workers their duty was to universalize *khadi* and to reconstruct the village on the basis of a handicraft civilization. This is how Gandhiji describes an ideal satyagrahi acting as a village worker:

"He would be bound with the poorest in the village by ties of service. He would constitute himself the scavenger, the nurse, the arbiter of disputes and the teacher of the children of the village. . . .His house will be a busy hive of useful activities centring round spinning."[47]

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[44] *Y. I.*, II, p. 442.

[45] *H.*, June 1, 1935, pp. 122 and 125; Nov. 12, 1935, p. 302 and Feb. 29, 1936, p. 18.

[46] *Y. I.*, I, pp. 1145-46.

[47] *H.*, Aug. 4, 1940, p. 235.

In 1938 Gandhiji advocated the enlistment of volunteers for the formation of peace-brigades in cities and villages to deal with communal riots. These volunteers must be out-and-out *ahimsa-ists* and have a living faith in God and equal regard for all the principal religions of the world. They must belong to the locality and develop contacts with all the people in the locality through personal, constructive service. They should also cultivate the acquaintance of the so-called *goonda* element in their locality. They should wear a distinctive dress so as to be recognized without the slightest difficulty and should carry no weapons. Each brigade should elect its own head and members should know each other well. Gandhiji's idea was that the brigades should take the place of the police and the military to deal peacefully with communal disturbances. The peace-brigade programme, he said, was "a programme of courting death in preventing Hindu-Muslim clashes and the like. It is a programme of dying to prevent violence."[48]

At Gandhiji's suggestion efforts were made after 1938 to organize peace-brigades in some parts of the country.

By far the most important section of India's non-violent army consisted of Khudai Khidmatgars or Surkhposh popularly known as Red Shirts.[49]

The founder of the movement is Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.[50] He started the movement outside the Congress in response to Gandhiji's call to the nation to protest against the Rowlatt Bill. Later the movement came very close to the Congress and the two had coalesced long before the partition of India.

In 1938 the Khudai Khidmatgars numbered over one lakh. They got no monetary allowance and had to provide their own uniform. They received training in semi-military drill and were much better disciplined than volunteers in other parts of India.

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48 *H.*, June 18, 1938, p. 152; Oct. 21, 1939, p. 310; May 5, 1946, p. 113; March 17, 1946, pp. 45-46; and Sept. 15, 1940, p. 285.

49 Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan resented the name as being inappropriate. Barr, p. 101.

50 None else among Gandhiji's co-workers perhaps accepted non-violence in a more comprehensive sense than the Khan. In 1940 when the Working Committee of the Congress offered conditionally to assist Britain in the war he resigned his membership of that body on the ground that he and his Khudai Khidmatgars stood for the non-violence of the brave.

During the non-violent movement of 1930-33 nowhere else was repression more severe and ruthless than in the Frontier Province and nowhere else did the satyagrahis meet it more bravely and non-violently.

As is well known, Gandhiji attached very great importance to the movement. Apart from the numbers and the past record, this movement was an experiment in the non-violence of the brave.[51] The people of the Frontier are among the most ferocious and warlike people of the world. Violence and revenge are the very breath of their being.[52] *Badala* (revenge) forms a vital part of the Pathan code of honour. Every Pathan, it is said, counts his murders and remembers his foes. If non-violence of the brave can be successfully developed even by these Pathans, it will be conclusive evidence that non-violence can be cultivated by all peoples irrespective of their past tradition.

Until 1938 the Khudai Khidmatgars fell short of Gandhiji's ideal and confined themselves to the political aspect of non-violence. But Gandhiji was hopeful that the Pathans, under their gifted leader, would be able to evolve true non-violence. In 1938 in collaboration with their leader, Gandhiji worked out a plan for the reorientation of the movement. In particular he recommended that, for non-violence to become a living thing, the Khudai Khidmatgars should go through a rigorous training in constructive activities.

Later on Badshah Khan set up a centre at Sardaryab for the training of Khudai Khidmatgars in constructive work. After the partition of India to which he was opposed Badshah Khan decided to extend the Khudai Khidmatgar movement to all the provinces of Pakistan and to make it the volunteer corps of the Pakistan People's Party which was started in 1948. He and his co-workers have however been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and the Khudai Khidmatgars have been subjected to severe repression.[53]

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51 *H.*, Aug. 28, 1940, p. 224.

52 The Khan Saheb holds that non-violence has appreciably diminished the blood-feuds of the Pathans and made them even more courageous. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 213.

53 The article entitled "In the Frontier Province" in *Harijan* dated October 22 and 29 and November 5, 12, and 19, 1938; Pyarelal, *A Pilgrimage for Peace*.

Gandhiji devoted much thought to the problem of the discipline of satyagrahi soldiers. He believed that the success of non-violent direct action depended on adequate discipline.

The aim of discipline is to develop, in the satyagrahi soldier, non-violence, soul-force or moral force, i.e., to help him to realize, in a concrete way, his moral and spiritual unity with all human beings.[54] The discipline requires "the will not to kill even in retaliation, and the courage to face death without revenge."[55] It requires cultivation of the spirit of service, sacrifice and renunciation. The best means to develop discipline in the rank and file of the satyagrahi forces is organized constructive work.

In 1921 Gandhiji drew up a pledge laying down the discipline required of every satyagrahi volunteer. In 1930 he laid down a set of nineteen rules. We give as the second appendix to this chapter both the pledge and the rules. In 1939 Gandhiji briefly stated the qualifications of a satyagrahi thus:[56]

1. He must have a living faith in God.
2. He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and, therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.
3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his cause to give up his life and his possessions.[57]

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[54] The ideal of non-violence includes man's relation to sub-human life also, but in the case of a political organization like the Congress, at the instance of Gandhiji, non-violence was limited to human beings. The extension of non-violence to sub-human species would have excluded from the membership of the Congress millions of people and thus cramped its effort to substitute the law of love for that of brute force in society. *H.*, Sept. 15, 1940, p. 285.

[55] *H.*, Sept. 8, 1946, p. 296.

[56] *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

[57] As regards willingness to be deprived of one's possessions, Gandhiji's attitude is determined by the ideal of non-possession. In 1920, it is said, he did not object to satyagrahis alienating their property to avoid its attachment or sale by the Government. Not that he encouraged the practice, but he left it to satyagrahis to fix the limit of their suffering. He also approved of the Congress ministries restoring the land of satyagrahi sufferers which had been vindictively disposed of at absurdly cheap rates by the preceding Government in pursuance of their repressive policy. He was, however, against

4. He must be a habitual *khadi*-wearer and spinner.

5. He must be a teetotaller and be free from the use of other intoxicants.

6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.

7. He should carry out the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

The test of effective discipline is that there should develop among the volunteers a spirit and an atmosphere of non-violence which should affect all those that come in contact with them. They should be able to exercise restraint in the face of the greatest provocation and to control the violent elements in the locality.[58] They should also be serious about the constructive programme. Gandhiji does not expect satyagrahi soldiers to assimilate the whole science of satyagraha and strictly to live up to all the implications of non-violence. According to him, "There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence."[59] Nor does he expect them to have the resourcefulness of the general. It is enough if they faithfully carry out his orders.[60] But they must develop the capacity to act even without the leaders, for the latter may be removed by the Government any moment. This is why, according to Gandhiji, in satyagraha "at a pinch every satyagrahi soldier has also to be his own general and leader."[61]

The volunteer need not have the Western type of literary education which is not much of an advantage; for its emphasis on material values makes it difficult for the individual to shed attachment.[62]

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satyagrahis trying, in the event of their capturing the State machinery, to cash their past sacrifices by claiming preference in Government appointments, demanding reinstatement to dismissed posts, or seeking compensation for losses. *History of the Congress*, p. 274. *H.*, Dec. 3, 1938, p. 364.

[58] *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 175.

[59] *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 214.

[60] *H.*, Aug. 25, 1940, p. 262.

[61] *H.*, July 28, 1940, p. 227.

[62] This is an important reason why Gandhiji would much rather prefer the unsophisticated common man to the modernized city-dweller. When he was in England for the Round Table Conference it was suggested to him

The leader, his lieutenants and the non-violent organization try to propagate the message of satyagraha among the masses.

To propagate is to disseminate or diffuse some belief or practice. Propaganda is a systematic scheme or concerted movement for the promotion of a doctrine or practice.[63] In the modern State propaganda is the instrument which a group employs to control public opinion with a view to acquire, wield and preserve the power of government. Both in international warfare and political conflicts the object of propaganda is to increase the morale of the propagandist and disrupt that of the opponent. In the West the character and content of propaganda is determined by the prevailing attitude of moral cynicism and unscrupulous opportunism.

The modern propagandist is an expert psychologist, an adept in symbol-making and phrase-coining, and a demagogue who can, by subtle suggestion and mass hypnosis, evoke in the people the desired emotional effect and behaviour. A very wide range of instruments has been pressed into the service of propaganda. Education and Press, parades and processions, fraud and coercion, gold and patronage, the magic of slogans and oratory, colour and pageantry, painting and music, drama and sculpture—all these have their own place in the propagandist's artistry. Indeed, propaganda is considered quite different from accurate information and unbiased scientific exposition.

In his views on propaganda Gandhiji differs vitally from this Western attitude. He is against exploiting public opinion and acquiring over it an illegitimate power. But he does believe in propaganda in the sense of transmitting and disseminating truth and educating public opinion along non-violent lines. It

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that rather than giving all his attention to the humble folk in the East End he should use his opportunities to win the sympathy of the intellectuals and the governing class also. He did not agree to the suggestion. "If I can win the workers," he pointed out, "the impression I make on them will percolate upwards." *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 190.

[63] *The Oxford English Dictionary* and *A New English Dictionary* edited by Sir James Murray. E. H. Henderson defines propaganda as a process which deliberately attempts through persuasion-techniques to secure from the propagandee, before he can deliberate freely, the responses desired by the propagandist. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1943, XVIII, pp. 71-87.

is not enough for the satyagrahi to follow the ideals of truth and non-violence himself, he should also help others to comprehend them and live up to them.

Ideally speaking, satyagraha or soul-force transcends material media and is self-propagated. Truth and non-violence, the language of the soul, can be best represented by life itself and not by mere words spoken or written. "It is my profound conviction that truth is self-acting.... If we have Truth in us, it will go out to them (people) without effort...."[64] As Gandhiji once remarked to some Christian missionaries, "...the moment there is a spiritual expression in life, the surroundings will readily respond. There is no desire to speak when one lives the truth. Truth is most economical of words. There is thus no truer or other evangelism than life."[65]

The real propaganda for satyagraha, therefore, is the satyagrahi living up to non-violent values. "Those who believe in the simple truths I have laid down," Gandhiji said in one of his speeches, "can propagate them only by living them."[66] A life lived according to the principles of non-violence is a life of direct personal service of the people and service involves suffering, both service and suffering producing the greatest effect when silent and unadvertised. Says Gandhiji, "...the silent and undemonstrative action of truth and love produces far more permanent and abiding results than speeches or such other showy performances."[67]

A life lived according to non-violent values implies control over thought, and fully controlled thought acquires the greatest potency and never goes in vain. "Thought control means maximum of work with minimum of energy. If we had that control, we should not have to put forth the tremendous effort we do. Non-violent action does mean much silent work and little speech or writing."[68]

No doubt suffering love expressing itself in service advances the cause of satyagraha as nothing else can, but the satyagrahi, not having complete thought control due to human

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[64] Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 20.
[65] *H.*, Dec. 12, 1936, p. 353.
[66] *H.*, March 28, 1936, p. 49.
[67] *Y. I.*, Aug. 8, 1929.
[68] *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 160.

imperfection, also taps all legitimate means, the Press and the platform, parades and processions, songs and other visual and verbal symbols which can help in the education of the masses. There is nothing intrinsically immoral or wrong in the use of these means.

Though innocent in themselves, the usual modes of propaganda must be treated as hand-maids of the service of the masses and must not supplant it. In 1936 the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh stressed the need of some kind of organized propaganda in order to help the spread of Gandhiji's teachings. Gandhiji, while insisting that satyagraha can be demonstrated only by the life of a satyagrahi, conceded that other methods may also be utilized. He said, "You may say that books and newspapers are needed in order to help workers and answer critics. Well, I write as much as is needed in order to explain the things I stand for. . . . Write, if you feel that you cannot do without it. But let not your work suffer or the people's enthusiasm be damped because you fail to publish books."[69]

The Press and similar means of propaganda must never offend against truth and non-violence, and the emphasis must be on quality rather than on speed and quantity.[70] Thus it was Gandhiji's experience that touring on foot was better propaganda than a whirlwind campaign by car and aeroplane. Gandhiji undertook many propaganda tours of the country, but easily the two most impressive of these were the historic march on foot to Dandi during the civil disobedience of 1930 and the village-to-village peace mission pilgrimage in Noakhali during 1947.

Gandhiji distrusted undue enthusiasm and discouraged all demonstrations and slogans that smacked of anger or intolerance.[71] In satyagrahi meetings he always insisted on discipline, respect for opposite views, and speeches not being punctuated with either marks of approval or disapproval of the audience.[72]

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69 *H.*, March 28, 1936, pp. 49-50.

70 "Speed is not the end of life." Mira, *Gleanings*, p. 16.

71 For Gandhiji's detailed instructions as to how processions, demonstrations, etc. should be non-violently managed see *Y. I.*, I., pp. 314-29 and 442-44.

72 *Speeches*, pp. 444-56 and 544-45.

In his speeches the satyagrahi must avoid any trace of untruth and exaggeration and must not seek to arouse in the audience violent feelings of anger or hatred. This does not mean that satyagrahi addresses are unimpressive. Nothing is more impressive, nothing works as a more effective spell than truth. The language of Gandhiji's speeches is Biblical in its simplicity. He utterly lacked the hypnotic mannerisms of delivery and semi-hysteric shouting and shrieking which characterized Hitler's demagogic performances. All the same Gandhiji's simple utterances made an irresistible appeal.[73]

Indeed Gandhiji had a flair for using various means of propaganda to the best advantage. His Dandi March, the manufacture of salt, the bonfire of certificates in South Africa[74] and of foreign cloth in India, and *hartals*[75] are some of the instances which bear testimony to his effectiveness in this respect. In his *Autobiography* he distinguishes between an argumentative speech and another that was intended to be a feeling appeal.[76] Before the Congress accepted office in the provinces in 1937, Gandhiji once expressed the opinion that the Congress regime should be inaugurated with something that caught the imagination of the masses.[77]

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[73] Krishnadas describing one of his speeches delivered in English says, "I knew not whether to call it a speech, or an inspired utterance pregnant with celestial force...every single word came from the innermost depth of his heart and acted like a charm. Hence the mere sounds of his words pierced and entered the hearts of its hearers. As he went on talking in solemn strain, it seemed as though he was casting a hypnotic spell over the audience, and irresistibly drawing all hearts to himself. I noticed that as he spoke there was no emotion in his eyes, nor was there the slightest movement of the limbs." *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I, p. 91.

Referring to his meetings in London at the time of the Round Table Conference, Muriel Lester observes, "He would begin to talk in his low, quiet voice, deliberate, objective and exact in every statement, as befits the worshipper of truth, with no shred of passion, piety or sentiment...no oratory, no use of voice inflexions, no movement or gesture, none of the usual concomitants of enthusiasm and persuasiveness." Walker, *Sword of Gold*, p. 127. See also *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 142-43.

[74] *South Africa*, Ch. XXVII.

[75] In his evidence before the Hunter Committee (1919) Gandhiji stated that "*Hartal* was designed to strike the imagination of the people and the Government." *Y. I.*, I, p. 23.

[76] *Autobiography*, II, p. 537.

[77] *H.*, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 412.

The tremendous hold that Gandhiji acquired over the masses in India is ample evidence of his being a great propagandist in the right and not the shady, disreputable sense of the term. For three decades he dominated Indian politics and represented the Indian masses as no other Indian leader did. He revolutionized the outlook of the people, disintegrating conventions, upsetting outmoded standards, creating new symbols and setting up new values.

His effectiveness as a propagandist was due to the fact that he had been closely following what he had been preaching. His devotion to truth and non-violence irrespective of where they might lead, a devotion ringing so clear in his writings and utterances, his all-sided self-control, his meekness combined with the unbending and unbendable strength of a true satyagrahi, the bare body and the loin-cloth symbolizing his identification with the poor and indicating the extent to which he had divested himself of all possessions in order to serve them—all these are indications of an unusually close approximation of personal life to principles propagated. Thus the strength of his appeal is primarily due to the force of his personality, his soul-force.

Gandhiji is against the newspaper or the popular Press which is a commercial concern and is controlled by financiers and advertisers. He had such newspapers in mind when, addressing some college students in 1925, he characterized the craze for newspapers as "pitiable and terrible", for "newspapers afford nothing of human interest. They offer nothing to help the character."[78]

But a properly conducted journal can act as a powerful weapon in satyagraha. Writing about *Indian Opinion*, which he published in South Africa, he observes, "Satyagraha could probably have been impossible without *Indian Opinion*."[79] Perhaps *Young India* and *Navajivan* and later *Harijan* weeklies played no less an illustrious part in the movements of non-violent resistance in India. These journals were a mirror of

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[78] *Y. I.*, II, p. 1208.
For similar criticism of English newspapers see *Hind Swaraj*, p. 17.

[79] *Autobiography*, II, p. 76.

Gandhiji's non-violent life and a medium of educating the reading public in the inner meaning of satyagraha.[80]

In order that journalism may play its legitimate part its sole aim should be service, i.e., it should fearlessly express and educate public opinion and expose popular defects and abuses in the State. But no journal can realize the ideal of service so long as it depends on the support of the advertiser and permits its pages to be soiled by indecent advertisements. So a newspaper should be self-supporting, for this is the clearest proof that the service that the paper renders is actually desired and appreciated by the community and is not imposed upon it by force.[81] The profits, if any, should be utilized for some constructive public activity.[82] Newspapers, moreover, must weigh every word they write and must not indulge in untruth or exaggeration or bitterness.[83]

In the course of a satyagraha campaign the Government places serious restrictions on the freedom of the Press. In such a case Gandhiji advises the newspapers either to cease publication or to challenge the Government and brave all consequences. In the past campaigns in India when the Government suppressed the entire English and Vernacular Press openly advocating the cause of satyagraha, under Gandhiji's advice the satyagrahis depended for carrying their message to the masses on small handwritten unregistered newspapers. Those who receive the first copy of these recopy and thus the process of multiplication is made to cover a large part of the country. Besides, one copy passes from hand to hand and serves a surprisingly large number. These handwritten sheets make a deep impression of sincerity, eagerness to suffer and defy consequences, and exert far greater influence upon public opinion than regular newspapers.

When the anti-war satyagraha of 1940-41 started there was a fear that the Government might suppress the entire Congress Press. Gandhiji advised the extensive use of oral news-carrying as a substitute for the printed word. He wrote, "Let every one become his own walking newspaper and carry the good news

80 *Autobiography*, II, chapters 13 and 34; *South Africa*, Ch. III.
81 *Autobiography*, II, p. 77; *South Africa*, p. 222; *Y. I.*, I, p. 3; *Y. I.*, II, p. 5.
82 *Y. I.*, I, p. 1034; *Y. I.*, II, p. 6.
83 *Autobiography*, II, pp. 77-78.

from mouth to mouth....The idea here is of my telling my neighbour what I have authentically heard. This no Government can overtake, or suppress. It is the cheapest newspaper yet devised, and it defies the wit of the Government, however clever it may be. Let these walking newspapers be sure of the news they give."[84]

On the whole, the strength of the satyagrahi propaganda lies in the universal appeal of its high moral objective and its downright adherence to truth. This propaganda is primarily conducted through service and suffering, and its efficiency is also due to the fact that the usual means of propaganda, i.e., speeches, writings, etc., cannot move us as the sight of persons living up to an ideal and suffering for it does. The suffering satyagrahi moves our entire being, makes the ideal vivid, concrete and living and induces in us an enduring heart-felt belief which affects our conduct much more than a mere intellectual conviction. Apart from the question of efficiency, the usual means of propaganda are in the hands of the capitalist and the exploiter and cannot be fully utilized by those seeking to revolutionize the existing social, political and economic systems. On the other hand service and sacrifice are open to all.

By far the best propaganda for satyagraha is the constructive programme. Truth and love are life-giving and even the apparently destructive, but really cleansing, form of satyagraha, i.e., non-violent direct action, is undertaken with a view to remove obstruction in the pathway of reconstruction. Cleansing is the means, construction the end. Constructive satyagraha is nothing but "internal growth". It is the concrete expression of truth and non-violence.

It was to facilitate non-violent reconstruction in India that Gandhiji worked to destroy the existing political system by means of non-violent direct action. But the work of construction was not to wait till the State machinery was captured by non-violence. Gandhiji was a philosophical anarchist. He aimed at reducing State action to the minimum and believed in reform from within through private, i.e., non-governmental activities. That is why constructive work was to precede direct action, accompany it and follow it. According to him, the satyagrahi

84 *H.*, Nov. 10, 1940, p. 334.

builds anew even as he struggles against an outmoded, unjust social order.

But for this emphasis on the constructive programme, Gandhiji believes, non-violent direct action is impossible for several reasons. To fight with the opponent satyagrahis must generate internal strength through self-purification by conscious co-operative effort. Fighting against evils in others and harbouring them in oneself is neither truth nor non-violence. This purification does not mean agitation and demonstration, nor even the excitement of jail-going. It is quiet, solid, substantial work—direct personal service of the masses, suffering for them, organizing them, educating them in the ways of non-violence and thus bringing about a peaceful atmosphere of solemn determination. Constructive work is thus collective purificatory effort through service. It is mass effort and mass education.[85]

If the difficult, slow and exacting work of reconstruction is too humble, dull and unattractive to satyagrahis, if they hunger and thirst merely for joining battle with the adversary, direct action will be destructive and violent. For it is a clear indication that satyagrahis lack the spirit of service and non-violence and still harbour violence. As Gandhiji once remarked, "Unaccompanied by the spirit of service, courting imprisonment and inviting beating and lathi charges, becomes a species of violence."[86] "Civil disobedience, without the backing of the constructive programme, is criminal and a waste of effort."[87] In 1942 he wrote, "He who has no belief in the constructive programme has. . .no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently."[88]

Describing the efficacy of the constructive programme Gandhiji wrote in 1922, "It will steady and calm us. It will wake our organizing spirit, it will make us industrious, it will make us fit for Swaraj, it will cool our blood."[89] The constructive programme turns a raw satyagrahi recruit into a disciplined soldier. Being a sure test of the earnestness of satyagrahis, it weeds out moral weaklings, and opportunists.

85 *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 129.

86 *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 67.

87 Gandhiji's statement, dated Oct. 30, 1941.

88 *H.*, April 12, 1942, p. 112.

89 *Y. I.*, I, p. 404.

Success in a satyagraha campaign is impossible unless satyagrahis have the sincere backing of and firm control over the masses so that the latter would eschew all violence. The only way to acquire this control is to win the heart of the masses and to establish a living contact with them. This is impossible unless satyagrahis "work for them, through them and in their midst, not as their patrons but as their servants."[90] Constructive work, as Gandhiji wrote in 1930, "must throw together the people and their leaders whom they would trust implicitly. Trust begotten in the pursuit of continuous constructive work becomes a tremendous asset at the critical moment." Constructive activities are not only an evidence of the sincerity of satyagrahis but also show to the masses, as no mere words can, the potentiality of satyagraha for ending all exploitation and elevating their status. Constructive work also goes a long way to convince the opponent of the non-violent intentions of the satyagrahis. To Gandhiji, "Constructive work, therefore, is for a non-violent army what drilling etc., is for an army designed for bloody warfare. Individual civil disobedience among an unprepared people and by leaders not known to or trusted by them is of no avail, and mass civil disobedience is an impossibility."[91] "Just as military training is necessary for armed revolt, training in constructive effort is equally necessary for civil resistance."[92] In 1930 he called constructive work "our national ammunition".[93]

Even the earliest satyagraha campaign in South Africa had its positive constructive side, activities concerning "internal improvement".[94] In 1920 Gandhiji presented the constructive programme, through the Congress, to India. As time passed his faith in the efficacy of the programme grew and he laid increasing stress on satyagrahis working the constructive programme before non-violent direct action as the means of generating moral strength and building up the morale, and after direct action, as a means of consolidation and as an antidote to any possible intoxication of a victory or depression of a set-back.

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90 *Y.I.*, III, p. 69.

31 *Y.I.*, Jan. 9, 1930.

92 Gandhiji's statement, dated Oct. 27, 1944.

93 *Y.I.*, Jan. 23, 1930, p. 23.

94 *South Africa*, pp. 76-77.

"Constructive programme," Gandhiji wrote in 1930, "is not essential for local civil disobedience for specific relief, as in the case of Bardoli. A tangible common grievance restricted to a particular locality is enough. But for such an indefinable thing as *Swaraj* people must have previous training in doing things of All-India interest."[95] But even in the case of Bardoli, as Gregg points out, Gandhiji ascribed much of the success to the fact that a constructive economic and social programme of reform had been going on there for six or seven years previous.[96]

The cleansing and constructive activities are the positive and negative aspects of satyagraha, each being indispensable to the other. Direct action to be non-violent should be rooted in and lead to reconstruction, while in this imperfect world the latter is bound occasionally to meet with obstructions which have to be removed by direct action. Constructive activities, however, are more important than direct action. In fact Gandhiji attaches far greater importance to constructive than to political work. Thus he wrote in 1931, ". . .my work of social reform was in no way less than or subordinate to political work. The fact is, that when I saw that to a certain extent my social work would be impossible without the help of political work, I took to the latter and only to the extent that it helped the former. I must therefore confess that work of social reform or self-purification of this nature is a hundred times dearer to me than what is called purely political work."[97] Unlike direct action, the constructive programme leaves no room for hypocrisy, compulsion and violence.[98] It does not provoke in the opponent violent feelings which may be aroused by direct action. Besides, the greater the cultivation of constructive non-violence, the less the need to offer civil disobedience.[99] Gandhiji considered the definite, intelligent and free adoption of this programme as the attainment of the substance of independence and believed that this would surely be followed by the transfer

[95] *Y. I.*, Jan. 9, 1930.

[96] *The Power of Non-violence*, p. 306.

[97] *Y. I.*, Aug. 6, 1931, p. 203.

[98] *H.*, June 1, 1935, p. 123.

[99] *Y. I.*, II, p. 447. *H.*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 376.

of power to the people.[100] This is why he called the constructive programme "the permanent part of non-violent effort", "the embodiment of the active principle of *ahimsa*" and "construction of *Poorna Swaraj*".[101] In 1942 he wrote, "If we wish to achieve *swaraj* through Truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way."[102]

In an earlier chapter we have pointed out how according to Gandhiji non-violence of the brave is vital to true democracy which he defines as "the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all."[103] The constructive programme is the *modus operandi* of ideal democracy.

As for its content, the constructive programme of Gandhiji is the scaffolding on which will grow the structure of the non-violent State. It is an effort to recast the present social order so as to eliminate exploitation and injustice and to revive and refine the nation's creative genius and culture by a voluntary regress to simplicity and naturalness. Non-violent life necessarily implies decentralized cottage industries and self-sufficient and self-sustaining satyagrahi rural communities.

In its methods the programme is individualistic. Gandhiji believes that to revolutionize the entire country the satyagrahi should concentrate his efforts on a particular area, a village or town and there too on individuals. The particular and the individual is a definite, living, tangible entity, while the general and

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100 *Speeches*, p. 843.

In 1944 Gandhiji observed, "...the constructive programme is the non-violent and truthful way of winning *Poorna-Swaraj*. Its wholesale fulfilment is complete independence. Imagine 40 crores of people engaged in the whole of the constructive programme which is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward. Can anybody dispute the proposition that it must mean complete independence in every sense of the expression, including the ousting of foreign domination?" His statement dated Oct. 27, 1944.

101 *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 129 and June 3, 1939, p. 147. *Constructive Programme*, p. 1.

102 *H.*, Jan. 18, 1942, p. 4.

103 *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

universal is an invisible, indefinite, vague abstraction. The individual is essentially spiritual and rational and possessed of a free will. There is no limit to his capacity for regeneration. Every individual has his peculiar problems. His regeneration will come through the performance of his specific duty—his *swadharma*—in the context of his unique life situation. The fulfilment of *swadharma* is the loving service of his neighbours. Nor need the individual "wait for anyone else in order to adopt a right course." "It is possible for an individual to adopt this (non-violent) way of life without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can observe a certain rule of conduct, it follows that a group of individuals can do likewise."[104] Thus the reform of the individual will lead to that of the group. If a few individuals in a village are affected by the example of the satyagrahi and are converted to the new way of life the regeneration of the locality will be facilitated. Similarly, once the problems of a few villages are solved and a spirit of co-operation developed, it will not be difficult to solve the problems of the entire district and so on. It is some such reasoning which was responsible for Gandhiji's stay at Sevagram. He also holds that "in order to do full justice to constructive work it must be treated on its own merits and not made an appendage to political work."[105]

The constructive programme in India is essentially village work. The eighteen items which Gandhiji included in the programme were indispensable for the emancipation of the nation through non-violence. These items are:

1. Communal unity;
2. Removal of untouchability;
3. Prohibition;
4. *Khadi*;
5. Other village industries;
6. New or basic education;
7. Adult education;
8. Village sanitation;
9. Service of backward tribes;
10. Uplift of women;

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104 *H.*, Aug. 25, 1940, p. 260.

105 *New Horizons in Khadi Work*, Pyarelal's statement, March 28, 1945.

11. Education in hygiene and health;
12. Propagation of *Rashtrabhasha*;
13. Love of one's language;
14. Working for economic equality;
15-17. Organization of *kisans*, labour and students;
18. Nature cure.

Of these Gandhiji attaches the greatest importance to the economic items and particularly to *khadi*. Gandhiji considers economic problems in terms of the moral wellbeing of man. His economic outlook is determined by the ideals of non-possession, non-stealing, bread-labour and *swadeshi*. The ideal of economic equality is dear to him, as the co-existence of superfluities and starvation means exploitation and frustration, want and squalor and makes the realization of spiritual unity so difficult for the rich and the poor. To Gandhiji working for economic equality is the master key to non-violent independence; for a non-violent State is an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the poor persists and the conflict between them is not abolished.[106] By economic equality Gandhiji means approximate, and not absolute, equality. "Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by every one. It does mean, however, that every one will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat, and sufficient *khadi* with which to cover himself. It also means that the cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed by purely non-violent means."[107] The goal that society should try to reach is equal remuneration for all types of work.[108] The first step towards this goal is for the satyagrahi to take to voluntary poverty. Says Gandhiji, "I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view....I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightaway make a beginning with myself....For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor."[109] Besides the personal example, Gandhiji advocates both levelling down and

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[106] *Constructive Programme*, p. 18.

[107] *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 253.

[108] *H.*, March 16, 1947, p. 67; March 23, 1947, p. 78; and Aug. 10, 1947, p. 274.

[109] *H.*, March 31, 1946, p. 64.

levelling up. For levelling down, he would so far as possible avoid legislative expropriation and confiscation as these involve violence. To induce the rich to accept the ideal of economic equality and hold their wealth in trust for the poor, he would depend upon persuasion, education, non-violent non-co-operation and other non-violent means. According to Gandhiji, the theory of the trusteeship of the wealthy for their superfluous wealth lies at the root of the doctrine of equal distribution. The only alternative to trusteeship is confiscation through violence. But by resorting to violence society will be poorer "for, it will lose the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth. Non-violent non-co-operation is the infallible means to bring about trusteeship because the rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society."[110]

For removing the abject, grinding poverty and unemployment of the masses, his remedy is *khadi* and the revival of other handicrafts and cottage industries, the revival being "an extension of the *khadi* effort". Gandhiji considers *khadi* as one of the two most important of his activities, the other being removal of untouchability.[111] *Khadi* is to him the most effective substitute for violent dispossession.[112] His attachment to *khadi* is due primarily to moral considerations.

Non-violence and centralized industry, he thinks, are incompatible. Mass production is exploitation of nature as well as man and this is the very negation of non-violence. Conscious adoption of handicrafts is an important step towards world peace in so far as mass production, which can only subsist on the control of large markets, is the mainspring of modern international rivalries, imperialistic exploitation and wars.

In national affairs large-scale industry vitiates democracy. For it leads to concentration of economic power and this implies corresponding concentration of political power and the ever present possibility of the abuse of such power.

Mass production degrades workers and deprives them of their dignity and worth. It uproots them from the purity and naturalness of domestic atmosphere in rural areas, baulks their creative urge and turns them into mere statistical units.

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[110] *H.*, Aug. 25, 1940, p. 260. See also ch. IV above.

[111] G. D. Birla, *Bapu* (Hindi), p. 19.

[112] *H.*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 375.

Large-scale production offends against nature too. Increasing cost of coal and oil, the accumulated energy reserves of the earth, and their gradually diminishing supplies have led some thinkers to the conclusion that in order to balance the energy budget of the world production should be carried on through handicrafts. Handicrafts, unlike big machinery, depend on human labour, i.e., energy obtained from vegetation, the current source of energy supply on the earth's surface.[113] Further, mass production requires much larger capital than handicrafts and, instead of reducing unemployment, leads to its progressive increase due to constant rationalization under limited markets. Due to these defects Gandhiji considers industrialism to be a curse for mankind, and industrial civilization a disease and an evil.[114] Decentralized, small-scale economic organization using local raw materials and simple tools and implements is superior to large-scale production in all these respects.[115] Handicrafts and cottage industries ensure equitable distribution of wealth and spreading over of purchasing power and prevent unemployment, urbanization, moral deterioration, exploitation by capitalists or professional experts and other concomitants of centralized production.[116] Decentralization of production and distribution means automatic regulation of economic life with very little chance of fraud and speculation.[117] Cottage industries also mean employment in congenial occupations in the natural setting of the worker's own place of habitation, combined with numerous physical, moral, material and other benefits that go with such employment. They preserve the purity and compactness of domestic life, the artistry, skill and creative talent of the people and their sense of freedom, ownership and dignity. They are a move towards simplification of life and ruralization of society. The conscious adoption of cottage industries will lead

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[113] R. B. Gregg, *The Economics of Khaddar*, chs. I and II; Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, pp. 156-58.

[114] *Y. I.*, Nov. 12, 1931, p. 318; *Y. I.*, II, p. 1187.

[115] For a discussion regarding machines in relation to decentralized non-violent economic organization see pp. 203 and 313-15, *infra*.

[116] It has been calculated that in the textile industry (mills) in India the wage bill comes to only 22 per cent of the proceeds of products. In the case of *khadi* the wages form about 60 per cent of the price. *Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, cited above, p. 214.

[117] *H.*, Nov. 2, 1934, p. 302.

to the economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the villages and develop in the people the moral stamina to stand square against all oppression and injustice. Gandhiji believed that industrialization, even if socialized, would not be free from the evils of capitalism, "...the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them."[118]

Before India became free, even in the absence of any considerable State aid *khadi* occupied a prominent place in the economy of the country and could claim to be a sound economic proposition.[119] No doubt *khadi* costs more than the mill-cloth to the consumer, but to the farmer the price is immaterial, for he gets his *khadi* from his own yarn. By patient experimentation, improvement of tools and application of scientific knowledge *khadi* production can be made much more efficient.

After food cloth is the article most universal in demand. So to Gandhiji *khadi* is one of the lungs of the nation, the other being agriculture.[120] He also calls *khadi* the sun of the solar system of the village economy and likens other handicrafts to planets.[121] Agriculture is not the sun but one of the planets because agriculture as it is cannot by itself develop the faculties of mind as *khadi* can.[122] The progress of *khadi* means voluntary co-operation, skilful endeavour and honesty on the largest scale

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118 *H.*, Sept. 29, 1940, p. 299.

119 In 1946 the working capital of the A.I.S.A. stood at twenty-five lakhs. It took twenty-five years to reach that figure. During that period it had distributed over seven crores of rupees as wages among four and a half lakhs of the poor spinners and weavers, principally spread over twenty thousand villages of India. *H.*, Aug. 25, 1946, p. 277. Since 1947 the State has been trying as best it can to help in the development of *khadi* and other village industries. With that purpose the Union Government set up the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board in 1953. The development expenditure of the Board on the *khadi* industry during 1953-56 was Rs. 11.43 crores. During this period the value of production and sales of *khadi* increased by about 250 and 300 per cent respectively. During 1955-56 the total production of *khadi* came to 2.48 crores of sq. yards, its value being Rs. 4.78 crores. Of this 50.3 lakh sq. yards worth Rs. 56.5 lakhs was under the self-sufficiency scheme subsidized by the Board. During this year the value of purchases of *khadi* by Government Departments was Rs. 74.9 lakhs. All India Khadi and Village Industries Board, *Annual Report* for 1955-56.

120 His statement, Sept. 17, 1934.

121 *Y. I.*, III, p. 84.

122 *New Horizons in Khadi Work.*

known to the world. *Khadi* requires much more of honest co-operation than agriculture does.

With Gandhiji the spinning wheel represents a complete philosophy of life and is the living symbol of non-violence.[123] He says, "*Ahimsa* must express itself through acts of selfless service of the masses. I cannot think of a better symbol or medium for its expression than the spinning wheel."[124] *Khadi* signifies simplicity and, therefore, purity of life.[125] It is a symbol of the eagerness of the rich for the uplift of the poor. The wheel has thus come to represent the new satyagrahi civilization. Since 1920 the wheel had been connected with India's non-violent fight for freedom. It has also had the pride of place in the constructive programme.

It is wrong to think that Gandhiji's message of *khadi* was meant only for India's poverty-stricken masses and not for the entire world. "I do not believe," he wrote in 1946, "that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country."[126] "I do feel that it (the spinning wheel) has a message for the U.S.A. and the whole world." He hoped that the Western people, when they accepted it, would apply their matchless inventive faculty to make the spinning wheel a better instrument while retaining its essential characteristic as a cottage industry.[127]

The reason why in satyagrahi discipline Gandhiji lays greater stress on *khadi* than on any other item in the constructive programme is that "millions of people can take their share in this work and progress can be arithmetically measured. Communal unity and the removal of untouchability cannot be thus assessed. Once they become part of our daily life, nothing need be done by us as individuals."[128]

In 1945 Gandhiji effected a reorientation of the policy of the A.I.S.A. After the August disturbances of 1942 the Government pursued a policy of ruthless repression towards the Congress and its ancillary organizations. Consequently the activities of the A.I.S.A. suffered a severe set-back. The new policy adopted by

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123 *Charkha Sangh Paripatra* (Hindi), I, (Dec. 5, 1944), p. 2.
124 *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 113.
125 *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 137 and Jan. 28, 1939, p. 449.
126 *H.*, Sept. 1, 1946, p. 285.
127 *Y. I.*, Sept. 17, 1925, quoted in *For Pacifists*, p. 100.
128 *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 252.

the trustees of the A.I.S.A. on the recommendation of Gandhiji sought to deepen *khadi* work with a view to demonstrate how the spinning wheel could be made the foundation of the non-violent social order. According to the new policy the object of *khadi* workers should be not merely to provide economic relief to the poor but also to resuscitate self-reliance, initiative and non-violent virtues in the people.[129]

To influence people so as to lay the foundations of the new social order *khadi* workers must win the confidence of the people and enter every aspect of their life. So *khadi* work was no longer to be pursued as an isolated activity but as an integral part of the programme for the regeneration and uplift of villages. It thus became closely interwoven with such items as agriculture (including cattle improvement), removal of untouchability, realization of economic equality and above all education both in moral and material values for which *khadi* stands.[129] Thus the A.I.S.A. stood for all-round village service (*samagra gramaseva*) through the *charkha*.

Another important feature of the new policy was decentralization. The experience of non-violent movements in India clearly shows that the less decentralized a resisting or constructive non-violent organization, the easier it is for the Government to paralyze it. Gandhiji was anxious that non-violent organizations should not be at the mercy of the Government. He wanted completely to decentralize the production and sale of *khadi* so that every consumer of *khadi* would be a spinner and every one engaged in *khadi* production would be a *khadi*-wearer. Ultimately *khadi* work now carried on through the various branches of the A.I.S.A., would be left entirely to all-round village workers. But to start with the number of sale depots and production centres was to be reduced. Sale depots were to be turned into centres for imparting knowledge in all the processes of *khadi* manufacture. In towns part of the price of *khadi* sold in sale depots was to be paid in yarn. The proportion of yarn was to be gradually increased. In villages *khadi* should be exchanged for yarn alone, Gandhiji's ideal being every village producing just enough *khadi* for its own use.[130]

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[129] *Charkha Sangh Paripatra* (Hindi), I, Dec. 12, 1944, p. 2.
[130] *New Horizons in Khadi Work*, cited above.

So long as this ideal was not realized *khadi* produced in a particular place should be consumed there in the first instance. If people in any place produced without any difficulty more *khadi* than their requirement it could be supplied to the nearest place in need. But even for this Gandhiji felt that a district, at the utmost a province, should be the limit.[131] Those who did not spin for themselves could use the yarn spun by their relations or neighbours.

On the basis of yarn produced during the first five years at the Basic School at Sevagram Gandhiji was convinced that *khadi* could be introduced in the villages through *Nayee Talim* very quickly; for "*khadi* produced by the children during the period of their training would be sufficient to clothe the entire village and it would be the cheapest cloth possible."[131]

The A.I.S.A. tried to work out the new policy. But towards the close of his life Gandhiji complained that the Congress had given up non-violence when it accepted office and that *khadi* no longer occupied the proud place of being the symbol of *ahimsa*.[132] After his passing away the rule regarding a part of the price of *khadi* being paid in yarn was removed. It is feared that under the influence of increasing State aid greater attention may be paid to the production and sale of *khadi* than to the intensive efforts, as desired by Gandhiji, on the part of workers to make *khadi* the foundation of the non-violent social order.[133]

Reconstruction of villages so as to make them self-reliant requires the development not only of *khadi* but also of other

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131 *New Horizons in Khadi Work*; R. V. Rao, *Gandhian Institutions of Wardha*, pp. 45-46, 48.

132 *H.*, Nov. 2, 1947, p. 389.

133 To achieve "the progressive expansion and modernization of rural industry" the Second Five Year Plan of the Government of India contemplates the expenditure of Rs. 200 crores during the Plan period on the rural and small-scale industry. Out of this Rs. 48.4 crores will be devoted to *khadi* and village industries. It is significant that the annual report of the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board for 1955-56 suggests that "to achieve a uniform standard (of colour) which is essential if Government purchases of *khadi* were to increase the (*khadi*) centres have to equip themselves with modern processing plants...." The *khadi* centres have neither financial resources nor sufficient work for this expensive machinery. "The Board has, therefore, requested the Government for the sanction of grants to the centres for the installation of mineral dying plants." (p. 121 of the report).

existing, dying or dead cottage industries which are remunerative. *Khadi* and other cottage industries are interdependent. Without *khadi*, the other industries cannot grow, while without the revival of other essential industries, *khadi* cannot make satisfactory progress.[134] The development of village industries will turn the villages from mere creators of raw produce into self-sustained units and caterers for most of the requirements of the cities and will end the exploitation of the villages by the cities.[135] Gandhiji wanted such simple machines and tools to be used in village industries as the villagers could make and afford to use.[136] In very rare cases he would not object to even modern machine power being used when the work involved was so heavy that it would be cruel to use man-power and when machinery was used under proper safeguards to make exploitation impossible.[137]

In 1945, the All India Village Industries Association decided to appoint *sanchalaks* (directors or guides) who were, in the areas committed to their charge, to interpret the policy of the Association, survey the conditions of rural life and recommend schemes for constructive work. They were to supervise the work of village industries and educate the public about the various processes of these industries. They were also to guide and direct those carrying on the actual field work, i.e., agents, affiliated institutions, recognized producing centres and certified shops. All of these were to be independent of the central organization except for the supervision by *sanchalaks*.

Rural reconstruction would be incomplete without adequate attention to education in health and hygiene and to village sanitation. Gandhiji sought to develop in the country "a sense of national or social sanitation" and to turn Indian villages which are no better than dung-heaps into models of cleanliness.

The importance that Gandhiji attached to prohibition was due to the fact that people in villages and cities would be

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134 *H.*, Nov. 16, 1934, p. 317; *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 11.

135 *H.*, Dec. 21, 1934, p. 356.

136 *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

137 "When Machine Power" by J. C. Kumarappa, *H.*, March 15, 1942, p. 76. In 1942 with Gandhiji's approval the A.I.V.I.A. permitted certified shops to sell hand-lifted paper from pulp produced by power. For the place of machinery in the non-violent economic organization, see also pp. 313-15, *infra*.

incapable of moral effort necessary for satyagraha so long as they were in the grip of intoxicants. He felt that women and students had a special opportunity to advance this reform. By opening recreation booths and by acts of loving service they could acquire on addicts a hold which would compel them to listen to the appeal to give up the evil habit.[138]

Communal unity implies "an unbreakable heart-unity" and not mere political unity which may be imposed. Religious bitterness is a sign of lack of non-violent atmosphere. Gandhiji expected every Congressman to have the same regard for other faiths as he had for his own and to cultivate friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own.[139]

The last sixteen months of his life were devoted to the eradication of communal violence which broke out in India as a result of the decision to divide the country. Communal violence was, according to him, fatal to freedom and democracy. The majority community should constitute themselves into the guardians of the minority and give to the latter full religious and cultural freedom. The minority should be fearless and should neither migrate in panic nor depend on the police and the military for their protection. If attacked they should defend themselves non-violently, i.e., they should know the art of dying with self-respect. If they lacked capacity for non-violence they should defend themselves even violently. He held that the only way to ensure life with honour and safety to non-Muslims in Pakistan was to ensure it for Muslims in India.

In the cold weather of 1946-47, he experimented with the non-violence of the brave in pursuance of his "do or die" mission in the villages of Noakhali. He distributed his trusted disciples in the affected areas to work to bring about peace between Hindus and Muslims. Himself barefoot he pilgrimaged from village to village staying as far as possible in Muslim homes and expounding his message of the non-violence of the brave. His Noakhali pilgrimage and his fasts of September 1947 and January 1948 allayed communal bitterness. He however aroused the wrath of some people and died a martyr to the cause of communal unity.

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138 *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 7. See also pp. 317-18, *infra*.
139 *Ibid.*, cited above, p. 4.

Similarly social equality demands removal of untouchability which is a denial of the spiritual unity of all men and the law of *varna*.[140] Gandhiji held that if untouchability lived, Hinduism and with it India would die. His efforts regarding the removal of untouchability lightened the misery and restored the self-confidence of the depressed classes. The age-old prejudice against them is on the decline and the State and voluntary organizations are trying to root out the evil.

Non-violence rules out suppression of women also. "In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his."[141] He wants the customary and legal status of women to be changed so that they are placed on a footing of equality with and become true helpmates of men in the mission of service. Independence would be incomplete without the co-operation of women.

The Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust which collected more than a crore and a quarter of rupees in 1946 aims at the welfare and education of women and children in rural areas only through the agency of women workers. The Trust has been training women in basic education, health and sanitation, village industries, village service etc. Those who receive training open centres for village work in some part of their own district. In some of the provinces the Trust has started maternity homes, basic schools and dispensaries in rural areas.

If the constructive programme is to convert people to the new way of life and to lay the foundations of the future non-violent State, the education of children and adults must be conducted along non-violent lines. Basic education aims at transforming children into model villagers. "It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school."[142]

By adult education Gandhiji means true political education of the village adult by word of mouth which will open his mind to the greatness and vastness of his country and make him

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[140] See pp. 97-99, *supra*.

[141] *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 14.

[142] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

conscious of the power he possesses to remove foreign rule. Side by side with this education the adult should also be given literary education. Until 1943 he occasionally expressed indifference to the three R's. But from then onwards he regarded them as a vital part of the service of illiterate people, as this knowledge enables one to reach out towards further and further development.[143]

According to Gandhiji, our love of the English language in preference to the great languages of our country has caused a deep chasm between the educated classes and the masses, has cut off the latter from the modern developments and stood in the way of India's non-violent *swaraj*. Non-violent *swaraj* implies that "every individual makes his own direct contribution to the independence movement. The masses cannot do this fully unless they understand every step with all its implications. This is impossible unless every step is explained in their own language."[144] In addition to the cultivation of Indian languages for the political education of the masses Gandhiji also advocates the propagation of Hindustani as the *Rashtrabhasha*.

The constructive programme also includes work among labour, *kisans* and students. As for labour Gandhiji considers the non-violent organization of Ahmedabad to be a model for all India to copy.[145] The primary aim of labour work as a part of the constructive programme should be the elevation of labour to its deserved status. Labour should be "master of the means of production instead of being the slave that it is. Capital should be labour's servant, not its master. Labour should be made conscious of its duty from whose performance rights follow as a matter of course." Labour should have its own unions. These unions should run basic schools for workers' children and night-schools for the general and scientific education of workers. They should teach the workers the science of conducting a successful non-violent strike. They should also run a hospital, a creche and a maternity home at every centre.

In a predominantly agricultural country like India the masses mean the *kisans*.[146] The proper method of organizing

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143 *Constructive Programme*, pp. 13-14; Mira, *Gleanings*, pp. 20-21.

144 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

145 For Gandhiji's views on labour organization see Ch. X *infra*.

146 *Constructive Programme*, p. 22. See also Ch. X *infra*.

kisans is indicated by Gandhiji's *kisan* movements in Champaran, Kheda, Bardoli and Borsad. *Kisans* should not be exploited for political purposes outside their own personal and felt grievances. He was in favour of co-operative farming and co-operative cattle-keeping. He was also in favour of a decent living wage being paid to the landless labourer.

Students, Gandhiji advocates, should avoid party politics, political strikes, coercive and secret ways, and communalism. They should take to spinning, use *khadi* and village products, learn the national language and enrich their mother tongue. They should harbour neither communalism nor untouchability in their hearts. They should be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives.[147]

Nature cure is not a course of treatment but a way of life. It implies that a perfect mind is responsible for the perfect health of the body. For this, conscious belief in God is essential. Anything other than this living faith in God is contrary to nature cure. "...realization of God...makes it impossible for an impure or idle thought to cross the mind. Disease is impossible where there is purity of thought." This way of life demands "the observance of all other nature's laws hitherto discovered by man." Following this line of thought Gandhiji limits nature cure to the use of the five elements, i.e., earth, sky, air, sunlight, and water.[148]

The details of the constructive programme may differ from country to country, but the main principles are not local or temporary in character. The aim is the regeneration of society by ridding it of violence, and this requires a decentralized economic structure, social equality and the right kind of education.

The constructive programme of Gandhiji has often been criticized as reformist and reactionary. The programme, it is pointed out, is ameliorative and as such blunts the edge of popular discontent and reconciles people to their lot. It thus side-tracks the main issue and postpones the day of revolution. Revolution, it should be remembered, is often taken to mean violent change of political power from one group to another.

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147 *Constructive Programme*, pp. 23-25.

148 *H.*, April 7, 1946, pp. 68-69; May 19, 1946, p. 148; June 9, 1946, p. 171; Aug. 11, 1946, p. 257; June 15, 1947, p. 185.

Gandhiji, however, aims at a deeper revolution, a comprehensive change in values and symbols that control human activities and institutions. The constructive programme is a vital element in this non-violent revolution. The programme is not merely conceived in terms of the immediate but also lays the foundation of the future non-violent State.

To neglect the sufferings of the masses for the purpose of deepening the discontent and thus hastening the revolution is treating men and women as mere means. Besides, extreme poverty, which reduces human life to mere physical existence and deadens all initiative and resourcefulness, instead of hastening revolution, stands in the way of widespread awareness of social discontent.

The constructive programme carries the heartening message of satyagraha to the Indian peasant and makes him self-reliant and conscious of his rights and of how to achieve them as no mere speech-making and demonstrations can. It provides an opportunity to the rank and file of the satyagrahi army, in fact, to every individual to take some part in the work of social reconstruction. It is a common bond between satyagrahis and those that do not believe in non-violent direct action. This universality of its appeal is due to its comprehensive content. It touches every important sphere of life, moral and religious, economic and social. It is significant that in spite of much severe criticism no practicable alternative to the constructive programme has yet been suggested.

APPENDIX I TO CHAPTER VIII

HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

Though split into two, India having attained political Independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e., as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendency of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand.

Every *panchayat* of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded shall form a unit.

Two such contiguous *panchayats* shall form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves.

When there are one hundred such *panchayats* the fifty first grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second grade leader and so on, the first grade leaders meanwhile working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred *panchayats* shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of *panchayats* electing a second grade leader after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into Provincial or District Councils and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)

1. Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of *khadi* made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.I.S.A. and must be a teetotaller. If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own

person or in his own family and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

3. He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and keep a register of all these.

4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5. He shall organize the villagers so as to make them self-supporting and self-contained through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6. He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

7. He shall organize the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of *Nayee Talim*, in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8. He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters' roll are duly entered therein.

9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies:

1. A.I.S.A.
2. A.I.V.I.A.
3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh.
4. Harijan Sevak Sangh.
5. Goseva Sangh.

Finance

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission from among villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of poor man's pice.

M. K. G.

New Delhi, 29-1-'48
(*Harijan*, 15-2-'48)

APPENDIX II TO CHAPTER VIII

VOLUNTEER'S PLEDGE

The pledge that Gandhiji drew up in 1921 is as under:

With God as witness I solemnly declare that,

1. I wish to be a member of the National Volunteer Corps.

2. So long as I remain a member of the Corps, I shall remain non-violent in word and deed and shall earnestly endeavour to be non-violent in intent, since I believe that, as India is circumstanced, non-violence alone can help the *Khilafat* and the Punjab and result in the attainment of *Swaraj* and consolidation of unity among all races and communities of India whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee, Christian or Jew.

3. I believe in, and shall endeavour always to promote, such unity.

4. I believe in *Swadeshi* as essential for India's economic, political and moral salvation, and shall use hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of every other cloth.

5. As a Hindu I believe in the justice and necessity of removing the evil of untouchability and shall on all possible occasions seek personal contact with, and endeavour to render service to, the submerged classes.

6. I shall carry out the instructions of my superior officers and all the regulations not inconsistent with the spirit of this pledge prescribed by the Volunteer Board or the Working Committee or any other agency established by the Congress.

7. I am prepared to suffer imprisonment, assault, or even death for the sake of my religion and my country without resentment.

8. In the event of my imprisonment, I shall not claim from the Congress any support for my family or dependents.

In 1930 he elaborated the discipline embodied in the pledge into the following 19 rules:

As An Individual

1. A Satyagrahi, i.e., a civil resister will harbour no anger.

2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.

3. In so doing he will put up with assaults from the opponent, never retaliate; but he will not submit, out of fear of punishment or the like, to any order given in anger.

4. When any person in authority seeks to arrest a civil resister,

he will voluntarily submit to the arrest and he will not resist the attachment or removal of his own property, if any, when it is sought to be confiscated.

5. If a civil resister has any property in his possession as a trustee, he will refuse to surrender it, even though in defending it he might lose his life. He will, however, never retaliate.

6. Non-retaliation excludes swearing and cursing.

7. Therefore a civil resister will never insult his opponent, and therefore, also, he may not take part in many of the newly coined cries which are contrary to the spirit of *ahimsa*.

8. A civil resister will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or officials, English or Indian.

9. In the course of the struggle if any one insults an official or commits an assault upon him, a civil resister will protect such official or officials from the insult or assault at the risk of his own life.

As A Prisoner

10. A civil resister will behave with due decorum towards prison officials and will observe all such discipline of the prison as is not contrary to self-respect. Whilst he will salute officials in due prison discipline, he will not perform any humiliating task and refuse to cry victory to *sarkar*. He will take cleanly cooked and cleanly served food, which is not contrary to his religion, and will refuse to take food insultingly served or served in unclean vessels.

11. A civil resister will make no distinction between an ordinary prisoner and himself and will in no way regard himself as superior to the rest; nor will he ask for any conveniences that may not be necessary for keeping his body in good health and condition. He is entitled to ask for such conveniences as may be required for his physical and spiritual well-being.

12. A civil resister will not fast for want of conveniences whose deprivation does not involve any injury to one's self-respect.

As A Unit

13. A civil resister will joyfully obey all orders issued by the leader of the corps, whether they please him or no.

14. He wil carry out orders in the first instance, even though they appear to him to be insulting, inimical or foolish, and then appeal to higher authority. He is free to determine the fitness of the corps to satisfy him before joining it; but after he has joined it, it becomes his duty to submit to its discipline, irksome or otherwise. If the sum total of the energy of the corps appears to a member to be improper or im-

moral, he has a right to sever his connection, but being within it, he has no right to commit a breach of its discipline.

15. No civil resister is to expect maintenance for his dependents. It would be an accident if any such provision is made. A civil resister entrusts his dependents to the care of God. Even in ordinary warfare wherein hundreds of thousands give themselves up to it, they are able to make no previous provision. How much more, then, should such be the case in satyagraha? It is the universal experience that in such times hardly anybody is left to starve.

In Communal Fights

16. No civil resister will intentionally become cause of communal quarrels.

17. In the event of any such outbreak, he will not take sides, but he will assist only that party which is demonstrably in the right. Being a Hindu he will be generous towards Mussalmans and others, and will sacrifice himself in the attempt to save non-Hindus from a Hindu attack. And if an attack is from the other side, he will not participate in any retaliation but will give his life in protecting Hindus.

18. He will, to the best of his ability, avoid every occasion that may give rise to communal quarrels.

19. If there is a procession of satyagrahis they will do nothing that would wound the religious susceptibilities of any community, and they will not take part in any other processions that are likely to wound such susceptibilities.

CHAPTER IX

SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION

THE TECHNIQUE

Occasional group conflicts are inevitable. These should be settled by collective non-violent resistance. But though satyagraha can flourish in all places and at all times, even in a violent atmosphere, non-violent direct action cannot. To quote Gandhiji, "civil disobedience is not the law of life; satyagraha is. Satyagraha therefore never ceases; civil disobedience can cease and ought to when there is no occasion for it."[1] For the launching and continuance of non-violent direct action external and internal conditions, i.e., the condition of the enemy and the satyagrahi must be favourable.

The non-violent direct action is no ordinary war of blood and fire, thunder and devastation. It is a moral war in which the usual process of fighting is reversed and the whole conflict elevated to a higher plane. Its object being conversion and not coercion, service and reformation and not defeat and destruction of the enemy, it should not be applied against an enemy in difficulty, specially when that difficulty is a matter of life and death with him. In the words of Gandhiji "...we should not embarrass an opponent who is in difficulty and make his difficulty our opportunity."[1]

The reason for this emphasis on non-embarrassment is that taking advantage of the adversary's difficulty irritates him and makes him unsympathetic and revengeful. He feels that non-violence is merely a cloak and dissembling intended to harm him and his conversion becomes difficult. Emphasis on embarrassment makes the movement one of passive resistance.[2]

Gandhiji also believes that the satyagrahi should do nothing that may brutalize the enemy and harden his moral sense.[3] This does not mean that civil disobedience should be suspended merely because the opponent's repression is

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1 *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 404.

2 *Conversations*, p. 93.

3 See pp. 143-44 *supra*.

intensifying and becoming brutal.[4] In fact, if such suspension were inherent in satyagraha it would be a serious limitation and the opponent would have a powerful motive to be brutal in order to bring about suspension.

Thus in 1930 when the Government started a regular reign of terror to suppress the satyagraha movement, Gandhiji felt that the correct way to fight the brutal repression of the Government was to intensify civil disobedience and to widen its scope and thus to invite the Government "to disclose to the full the leonine paws of authority". "For according to the science of satyagraha, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims. Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremist character, voluntarily undergone."[5]

The eagerness of the satyagrahi not to embarrass the adversary may be exploited by the latter to ruin the non-violent group. But the satyagrahi must not exercise the virtue of self-restraint to the extent of self-extinction or suicidal self-suppression, for then the virtue becomes a vice.[6] In case non-embarrassment is exploited by the opponent it becomes the clear duty of the satyagrahis to resist the aggressor non-violently and defend themselves. Says Gandhiji, "Defensive civil disobedience becomes a duty when insult or humiliation is imposed upon us by an opponent. That duty would have to be done whether the opponent is in difficulty or not."[7]

To sum up, when the enemy is in difficulty it is the duty of the satyagrahi to do what is morally necessary, though he must avoid what may not be morally indefensible but is calculated to vex and embarrass the opponent.[7]

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[4] *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 159.

[5] Quoted in *History of the Congress*, p. 665. In 1939 no doubt Gandhiji advised the suspension of civil disobedience in some of the native States where authorities were getting brutalized. But this suspension was due partly to lack of adequate training on the part of satyagrahis and partly to Gandhiji's desire for a calm atmosphere in which he might think out a new orientation of civil disobedience. If the satyagrahis had been thoroughly disciplined presumably he would not have advised suspension. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 159.

[6] *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 290.

[7] *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 404.

To the satyagrahi far more important than external conditions are internal conditions. In Gandhiji's words, "external difficulties need never frighten a satyagrahi. On the contrary, he flourishes on external difficulties and faces them with vigour."[8]

As for satisfactory internal conditions, the satyagrahi group should be well-disciplined. In the last chapter we have discussed the implications of adequate discipline. In particular satyagrahis should take a real, living interest in the working of the constructive programme. Through this constructive service they should acquire control over violent elements in the masses so that they will remain at least passively non-violent so long as the non-violent resistance lasts. Thus he wrote in 1939, "The first indispensable condition precedent to any civil resistance is that there should be surety against any outbreak of violence whether on the part of those who are identified with civil resistance or on the part of the general public."[9] Besides, there should be in satyagrahis enough faith and discipline instinctively to await and obey the general's word. The satyagrahi army "should be so well prepared as to make war unnecessary."[10]

The sign of full preparedness is that suspension should never bring despondency and weakness in a satyagraha struggle.[10] Even if people are ready and suspension is ordered through the miscalculation of the general, the movement should not be affected adversely, for "suspension of civil disobedience, if it resulted in accentuation of repression, would itself become satyagraha in its ideal form."[11] On the other hand if suspension leads to desertion and disbelief it shows that deserters were only half-hearted satyagrahis and the movement would be the better without them.[12] If, however, satyagrahis survive the depression of suspension it would be an unmistakable sign that they have imbibed the message of non-violence.[13]

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[8] *H.*, March 30, 1940, p. 69.
[9] *H.*, March 18, 1939, p. 53.
[10] *H.*, Dec. 2, 1939, p. 361.
[11] *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 147.
[12] *H.*, April 1, 1939, p. 72.
[13] *Speeches*, p. 509.

In spite of all the precautions satyagraha on a mass scale is a dangerous experiment and there is always the risk of an outbreak of popular violence. But as against this the leader has also to balance what is perhaps a greater risk—the certainty of popular rage generated by tyranny and injustice bursting into violence, or what is worse, moral degradation due to the absence of an effective non-violent remedy in the face of a grave injustice.[14] Non-violent direct action avoids this violence as it enables the people to give such expression to their feelings as may compel redress. Thus opposition to immoral acts of the opponent may often become a duty in spite of the internal weakness of satyagrahis. Stressing this logic of overwhelming necessity even amidst uncongenial surroundings, Gandhiji once wrote, "If the Congress is goaded to it (civil disobedience), the science of satyagraha is not without a mode of application in spite of internal weakness."[15] Similarly in 1930 he pointed out that the argument that in an atmosphere surcharged with violence there is no scope for non-violence may be carried so far that non-violence may be made wholly ineffective. If civil disobedience has to be employed even in an atmosphere surcharged with violence, "it must be hedged in by adequate restrictions. In satyagraha, it is never the numbers that count, it is always the quality, more so when the forces of violence are uppermost."[16]

Whether or not the opportunity is suitable for starting direct action is to be decided by the general. His decision would be based on the justice of the issue that is the cause of conflict and the state of the preparedness of the satyagrahis. So long as his preparations are incomplete he refuses to be goaded into precipitate action either by the pressure of the opponent, his oppression and tyranny, or by the clamour of his followers. Thus the satyagrahi general gives battle at the time and on the ground of his own choice. He retains the initiative in his own hands and never allows it to pass into those of the enemy.[17]

The leader retraces his steps and suspends direct action if he has been guilty of any miscalculation, if he finds the required

[14] *Speeches*, p. 509; *H.*, July 1, 1939, p. 182.

[15] *H.*, August 4, 1940, p. 234.

[16] *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

[17] *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

spirit of non-violence lacking in satyagrahis and the community and there is a chance of demoralization.[18] "A wise general does not wait till he is actually routed; he withdraws in time in an orderly manner from a position which he knows he would not be able to hold."[19] Gandhiji's Ahmedabad (1919), Bardoli (1921) and Patna (1934) decisions are instances of suspension.[20] By the Patna decision civil disobedience was suspended for all except Gandhiji. Suspension of civil disobedience is not the suspension of satyagraha. It is merely changing the disposition of the non-violent forces from the work of cleansing to construction. Suspension is a strategic retreat for a more intensive preparation of the satyagrahi forces.

Non-violent direct action can be employed only for social good and not for immoral purposes. It cannot, for instance, be used to conquer a foreign country or establish an empire. For these violence is the only means.

The issue justifying direct action must be some serious grievance of the community. The grievance should so far as

[18] In 1922 Gandhiji was of the opinion that civil disobedience could be stopped only by political and not by non-political violence. In 1930, however, he relaxed and laid down that this time civil disobedience would continue in spite of violence, though he insisted that "Every effort imaginable and possible should be made to restrain the forces of violence." No doubt non-violence of the brave can neutralize any amount of violence. But with the Congress non-violence was only a policy. After 1934 his standard again went up and he insisted on the absence of violence as a necessary condition for the starting and continuance of civil disobedience. Violence, however, cannot stop individual civil disobedience as a purely defensive measure. *Y.I.*, I, p. 292; *Y.I.*, Jan. 23, 1930; Feb. 27, 1930. *History of the Congress*, p. 645; *H.*, Dec. 2, 1939, p. 361 and March 30, 1940, p. 69.

[19] *H.*, Oct. 22, 1938, p. 304.

[20] The suspension in 1919 was due to violence in Nadiad and Ahmedabad. Similarly the Bardoli suspension was due to popular violence at Chauri-Chaura, in which Congress and Khilafat men were involved and which had been preceded by other instances of political violence. Besides, in 1921 violence seemed to be on the increase and the discipline of the satyagrahis was too inadequate. The Patna (1934) decision was the recognition of the fact that the civil disobedience movement, being the non-violence of the weak, had weakened due to the severe repression of the Government. So as the author and initiator of satyagraha Gandhiji advised Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for *swaraj* as distinguished from specific grievances. Civil resistance for *swaraj* was to be confined to him alone and was to be resumed by others in his lifetime only under his direction. See *Conversations*, pp. 46 and 48.

possible be simple, tangible, concrete and well-defined and not abstract and complicated. Mixing up of motives is damaging in satyagraha and an issue should not be a mere cloak for advancing an ulterior objective.[21] Gandhiji also advocates the satyagrahi group fighting for the irreducible minimum. For the satyagrahi this minimum, he says, is the maximum.[22] The issue also must be within the power of the opponent to concede.[23]

In all the civil disobedience movements conducted by him or under his guidance Gandhiji always took care that the issue of the movement should not be confused with something different. In South Africa he refused to make common cause with the European strikers whose strike was not non-violent. In fact, he suspended the satyagraha strike of indentured Indians lest it be mistaken as being in alliance with that of the Europeans. In Champaran he took care not to give to the affair political and national colour.

Gandhiji's various non-violent campaigns also illustrate this double stress on concreteness and the restraint on demand, i.e., limited objective. Local campaigns are bound to be concrete. But the three all-India movements also bear out the principle. The first movement was for the redress of the Punjab and the *Khilafat* wrongs, though in 1920 at the instance of Mr C. Vijayaraghavachariar and Pt. Motilal Nehru Gandhiji agreed to include *swaraj* also in the demands.[24] In the second movement (1930-34) likewise, which he expected to be the final struggle for complete independence, he reduced his demand for *swaraj* to the well-known eleven points. Pt. Motilal Nehru criticized him for thus lowering the national demand but soon realized that conceding the eleven points would mean conceding the substance of independence. He conducted the movement of 1940-41 to defend the right of free speech, which he called the foundation-stone, the seed of *swaraj*.[25] Speaking about the issue he said, "This liberty is a concrete issue which needs no defining. It is the foundation of freedom, specially when it has to be taken non-violently. To surrender it is to surrender the

21 *H.*, May 27, 1940, p. 144.

22 *South Africa*, p. 319.

23 Mahatma Gandhi, *Constructive Programme*, p. 26.

24 *Autobiography*, II, pp. 579-80.

25 *H.*, Aug. 22, 1940, p. 291.

only means for attaining freedom."[26] This is not to deny that the demand for *swaraj* can legitimately form the issue of a non-violent conflict, but Gandhiji would like to reduce the demand to as concrete terms as possible. Even the Quit India resolution of the A.I.C.C. (Aug. 8, 1942) put the demand for independence in the concrete context of the peril of war. The resolution demanded the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India as an urgent necessity, because "The continuance of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and contributing to the cause of world freedom." The end of British domination, the resolution asserted, was necessary for the success of freedom and democracy, for only a free India could defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need.[27]

His advice to the leaders of satyagraha movements in the Indian States was also along these very lines. To give an instance, in 1939 his advice to the leader of the Travancore Congress was to forget for the time being *swaraj*, to concentrate on the details of administration and to fight for the elementary rights of the people. He said, "The authorities won't be frightened, and it will give you the substance of responsible Government."[28]

People sometimes object to this policy. Concrete particular wrongs, they say, are but symptoms of a deeper malady. To isolate them and to try to deal with them separately is a disservice to the masses for it makes them lose sight of the real objective.

Gandhiji's view, however, is not only inseparably connected with his basic principles but possesses great practical advantages also. Definiteness and concreteness, besides being in consonance with truth, leave no ground for misunderstanding and bring the problem within the comprehension of the masses affected, thus winning their support. Keeping the demand at the minimum convinces people of the *bona fides* of the satyagrahi group. To some extent it also allays the suspicions of the

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[26] *H.*, Aug. 22, 1940, p. 292.

[27] The A.I.C.C. resolution in *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, pp. 52-55.

[28] *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 175.

adversary. Aggression is violence and minimum demands are an indication of the essentially defensive character of satyagraha. Further, if on a definite, limited issue the masses are able to achieve success non-violently, the moral strength thus generated will enable them to set right more widespread grievances. Thus Gandhiji once remarked, "If I had only talked of *swaraj*, I would have come a cropper. By attacking details we have advanced from strength to strength."[29]

Once the fight begins, the satyagrahi group, even if its strength increases, must not add to its demand without good reason. Thus grievances which existed when the satyagraha was launched and the removal of which was not included in the demand should not be brought in to enlarge the objective. On the other hand a breach of a promise or any other injustice done by the opponent to the satyagrahi community during the course of the struggle can legitimately give rise to new demands. From this point of view when the adversary prolongs a satyagraha struggle by creating new difficulties for the satyagrahi, it is the latter who stands to gain. By the law of progression which applies to civil resistance there is a constant growth in the result to which it leads.[30]

Regarding the form of resistance, the principles of individual action discussed in chapter VII apply to group action also with necessary modifications. In satyagraha what is important is the spirit of non-violence rather than the isolated acts through which it is expressed. This is why Gandhiji insists on the satyagrahi leader being an out-and-out *ahimsaist*, for "without a living faith in it, he will not be able at the crucial moment to discover a non-violent method."[31] This also explains his great emphasis on the thorough discipline of the satyagrahis. Again, this is the reason why he is so particular about the beginning in the non-violent campaign being well and truly made by purest of men. Beyond this, Gandhiji believes, circumstances differ from one instance of group satyagraha to another and even in the same movement the situation keeps changing and assuming new and unexpected aspects. Thus the satyagrahi general has to improvise his response according to the exigencies of the

[29] *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 175.
[30] *South Africa*, Ch. XXVII and XXXVIII.
[31] *Y. I.*, Feb. 27, 1930.

situation, depending on the clarity of his vision and the keenness of his intuition. Just as a general of the ordinary army may alter his plans and orders according to the changing situation and the tactics of the enemy, so also the satyagrahi general. Over and above the situation outside, the latter has also to examine himself and to listen to "the dictates of the inner self".[32] It is unnecessary and impossible to visualize and draw up any detailed scheme of the resistance to cover all cases. To do so is to reduce a life-process to a set of cut-and-dried logical steps. Hence Gandhiji's much-criticized "one-step-enough-for-me" dictum. Thus he wrote in 1939, "Do not expect me to reveal how, if ever, I shall launch civil disobedience. I have nothing up my sleeve, and I will have no knowledge until the last moment. I am not made that way. I knew nothing of the salt march until practically the moment it was decided upon. This I know that God has rarely made me repeat history and He may not do so this time."[33] We propose, therefore, to confine ourselves to the general principles of corporate resistance as inferred from the past instances.

In chapter VII, we have discussed the object of non-violent resistance, the test of the genuineness of resistance, and the importance of persuasion, education of public opinion and efforts for compromise preceding the actual outbreak of hostilities. These equally apply to non-violent resistance on a group scale.

Gandhiji attaches great importance to open dealing in satyagraha. Upton Close once called him "the world's greatest example of political straightforwardness, the only true follower of the ideal of open diplomacy openly arrived at."[34] Pursuit of truth at any cost is to him the only diplomacy and this rules out secrecy of all kinds. He wrote in 1931, "In the method we are adopting, fraud, lying, deceit and all ugly brood of violence and untruth have absolutely no room. Everything is done openly and above board, for truth hates secrecy. The more open you are, the more truthful you are likely to be."[35]

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[32] *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 158.

[33] *H.*, December 2, 1939, p. 362.

[34] Natesan, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Man and His Mission, Appreciations*, p. 30.

[35] *Y.I.*, Dec. 21, 1931.

Absence of secrecy guarantees purity of means, for uncleanliness shuns light and seeks secrecy. Open dealing makes satyagraha a clean, open battle of defiance regardless of consequences. It is a symbol of moral superiority and appeals to the best in all concerned. It strengthens the morale of the satyagrahi rank and file. It enhances their dignity in the eyes of the public as well as the adversary whose morale, therefore, diminishes.

Open dealing also serves as an excellent propaganda. The news spreads far and wide and to some extent neutralizes the effect of subsequent censorship. Thus open dealing and eschewing secrecy are a practical proposition also. Indeed, as Gandhiji wrote in 1940, "No underhand or underground movement can ever become a mass movement or stir millions to mass action."[36]

In all his campaigns in India as well as South Africa Gandhiji always informed the Government of his plans of campaign in advance. He believed that non-violent direct action would be morally defective if started without sufficient notice. But never before was he so thorough-going in this respect as in the individual civil disobedience movement of 1940-41. Detailed information was sent to the Government several days in advance by every satyagrahi about his contemplated civil disobedience. The Congress Committees were also forbidden to keep secret books or funds.[37]

Secrecy on the other hand, carries the suggestion that the satyagrahi is afraid of the adversary and wants to escape punishment. "Secrecy aims at building a wall of protection round you. *Ahimsa* disdains all such protection. It functions in the open and in the face of odds, the heaviest conceivable."[38] It also shows the satyagrahi's eagerness to achieve quick results even by questionable means. "If once we begin doing something underhand, even for a good cause, then many wrongs will follow."[39] Secrecy, therefore, deprives satyagraha of its dignity,

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36 Gandhiji's statement dated Oct. 21, 1940.

37 *H.*, April 13, 1940, p. 89.

38 *H.*, Feb. 10, 1946, p. 2.

39 Barr, p. 170.

reducing it to a mere battle of wits. It is thus fatal to satyagraha.

In the second satyagraha movement (1930-34) when the repression of the Government became very severe satyagrahis fell back upon secret methods. But the movement began to slacken and demoralization set in. Later Gandhiji held that the secret methods were largely responsible for the demoralization of the masses.[40] In his speech before the A.I.C.C. on the 8th of August, 1942, Gandhiji laid emphasis on the need of avoiding secrecy and working openly in the coming non-violent struggle. In 1944 he disapproved of underground activities and held that the struggle would have led to greater progress if people had shown the non-violent bravery of his conception.

He is also against sabotage in the form of destruction of Government property as a part of the movement of non-violent resistance. "...even a national Government will be unable to carry on for a day if everybody claimed the right to destroy bridges, communications, roads etc., because he disapproved of some of its activities. Moreover, the evil resides not in bridges, roads, etc., which are inanimate, but in men. It is the latter who need to be tackled. The destruction of bridges, etc., by means of explosives does not touch this evil but only provokes a worse evil in the place of the one which it seeks to end...sabotage is a form of violence."[41]

Gandhiji is indifferent to money and numbers in satyagraha. He has repeatedly observed that the success of satyagraha depends on moral and spiritual rather than material resources.

It is not to suggest that he undervalues the co-operation of the masses. In his evidence before the Hunter Committee in 1919 he remarked that if he got a million men ready to act according to the principles of non-violence he would not mind enlisting them all.[42] He admits that the movement of mass satyagraha is impossible without mass discipline and mass support.[43] But numbers are a source of weakness when discipline is indifferent. Besides, satyagraha can achieve its object

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40 His statement dated May 5, 1933.

41 *H.*, Feb. 10, 1946, p. 2.

42 *Y.I.*, I, p. 17.

43 *South Africa*, p. 204.

even without assuming the mass aspect. And its success depends not on the force of numbers but on the capacity of satyagrahis, however small their number, to suffer for truth without ill-will for the adversary. To quote Gandhiji, "I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity.... Numbers become irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are a self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull. I am convinced that there is safety in fewness so long as we have not evolved cohesion, exactness and intelligent co-operation and responsiveness."[44] Again, "Numbers do not matter in satyagraha. Even a handful of true satyagrahis well organized and disciplined through selfless service of the masses, can win independence for India."[45]

Gandhiji's indifference to numbers is a corollary of his convictions regarding soul-force. The strength on which the satyagrahi relies is not the strength of his narrow, isolated, physical being but of his soul-force, which can defy the physical combination of the whole world. When one has an unflinching faith in soul and God one is self-sustained and gets the necessary support from within.

His emphasis on quality is also due to the fact that quality tends to multiply by its contagious example, while indifferent quantity is self-cancelling. This is the law of growth in satyagraha. It is by this logic of purity that in South Africa the number of satyagrahis which stood at 16 at one time swelled to 60,000 towards the close of the struggle. According to him sacrifice of quantity and insistence on quality are also essential for training the masses in the way of non-violence.[46]

Moreover, to the satyagrahi victory depends not on numbers but on withdrawing his co-operation from the evil-doer, on resisting him. So "for a fighter the fight itself is a victory, for he takes delight in it alone. He believes that victory or defeat...depends upon himself."[47] Further, "as a civil resistance army is or ought to be free from passion, because free

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[44] *Y.I.*, II, p. 503.
[45] *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 67.
[46] *History of the Congress*, p. 939.
[47] *South Africa*, p. 394.

from the spirit of retaliation, it requires the fewest number of soldiers."[48]

Closely similar are Gandhiji's views on the place of money in satyagraha. He raised crores for various causes and considered money "the sinews of war".[49] In 1921 he appealed to the people to contribute to the Tilak Swaraj Fund as much as they could. In 1927 he wrote, "The fund has served an immense national purpose. The tremendous organization that came into being all of a sudden could not have been created without this great national fund. . . ."[50] All the same Gandhiji is essentially indifferent to money, his attitude being determined by the ideal of non-possession. He believes that money plays the least part in satyagraha.[51] It cannot by itself help forward a satyagraha movement. It is his conviction born of long experience that the satyagrahi must simply cease to depend on money, for no movement or activity which has at its helm true and good men ever stops or languishes for want of funds.[52] On the other hand financial stability inevitably leads to spiritual bankruptcy.[53]

He is also against public institutions being run on borrowed money or permanent funds. "A public institution means an institution conducted with the approval of, and from the funds of the public. When such an institution ceases to have public support it forfeits its right to exist. Institutions maintained on permanent funds are often found to ignore public opinion. . . ."[54]

It is hardly necessary to add that satyagraha is inconsistent with pecuniary inducement to or hiring of volunteers. Adventurers participating on the ground of such selfish hopes will inevitably choke up the movement. There is, however, nothing wrong in giving, wherever it is possible, bare maintenance to poor volunteers and, when these volunteers are imprisoned or killed, to their dependents.

It was largely due to Gandhiji that India's struggle for freedom was so very inexpensive and the Congress could boast

48 *Y. I.*, I, p. 935.
49 *Speeches*, p. 584.
50 *Y. I.*, III, p. 102.
51 *Autobiography*, II, p. 433.
52 *South Africa*, p. 202.
53 *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 371.
54 *Diary*, I, p. 77; *Autobiography*, I, pp. 459-60.

of such a large number of honorary workers. Democracy which has been rendered so very undemocratic by the corrupting influence of wealth has much to learn from Gandhiji's sane attitude towards money.

Gandhiji holds that in a non-violent campaign the satyagrahi leader should, so far as possible, depend for men and money on the community or the area directly affected by the grievances which occasion the conflict. In his words, "It is the essence of satyagraha that those who are suffering should alone offer it."[55]

Gandhiji's eagerness to localize satyagraha and to forbid external assistance is due to the fact that "The idea underlying satyagraha is to convert the wrong-doer, to awaken the sense of justice in him, to show him also that without the co-operation, direct or indirect, of the wronged the wrong-doer cannot do the wrong intended by him. If the people in either case are not ready to suffer for their causes, no outside help in the shape of satyagraha can possibly bring true deliverance."[55] Thus the conversion of the wrong-doer can best be brought about by the sacrifice of the local people, the victims of the wrong-doer. The sacrifice of outsiders interferes with the process of conversion and increases bitterness. Besides, the principle of self-reliance and local responsibility compels people to fight their own battle and draws out the powers latent in them. The people become conscious of their strength and are able to win their deliverance. No amount of outside help can be a substitute for this self-effort.

The important weapons of corporate action are non-co-operation, civil disobedience, fasting, *hijrat*, picketing, economic boycott, and social ostracism.

Non-co-operation, besides being a matchless weapon in dyadic relations, is also a sovereign political remedy.

Governments are neither infallible, nor do they have any absolute right to misgovern. Gandhiji thinks that the mainstay of a Government is neither force at its command, nor merely the passive consent of the people but their active co-operation. Withdrawal of co-operation and support by the people, therefore, means complete paralysis and the end of the political system. "Even the most despotic Government cannot stand

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[55] *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 369.

except for the consent of the governed which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot." Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, its power is gone.[56]

Ordinarily it is the duty of the citizen to be law-abiding even as it is the duty of the Government not to flout the wishes, the interests and the moral sentiments of the people. But this obedience to the Government must not be uncritical and indiscriminate, for that is a sign of slavery. If the Government rides roughshod over popular feelings, if its ways are immoral and unjust, it becomes the right as well as the duty of the people to non-co-operate with the Government. Says Gandhiji, ". . .it is a right recognized from times immemorial of the subjects to refuse to assist the ruler who misrules."[57] What is true of Governments also applies to other exploiting groups and organizations.

When practised against a Government, "The primary motive of non-co-operation is self-purification by withdrawing co-operation from unrighteous and unrepentant Government. The secondary object is to rid ourselves of the feeling of helplessness by being independent of all Government control or supervision, i.e., to govern ourselves in all possible affairs; and, in fulfilling both the objects to refrain from doing or promoting injury, or any violence, to individual or property."[58]

This self-purification of satyagrahis means the growth of tremendous moral strength which brings the Government to its knees, compelling it to do justice. In case the Government persists in its immoral ways and refuses all redress, non-co-operation completely shatters the administrative machinery and paralyzes the Government.

As the object makes it obvious, non-co-operation is not only negative, it is not only a deliberate 'no' from the people to the Government, it has also its positive side. Its external negative success is in proportion to this inward positive growth, the growth of co-operation among the people. This is why Gandhiji lays such great stress on the political education of the masses. But for their co-operation non-co-operation can neither be thorough-going nor non-violent and in either case it will not be

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56 *Y. I.*, I, p. 205.
57 *Speeches*, p. 205.
58 *Y. I.*, I, p. 42.

effective. In the absence of this inward growth, even if non-co-operation were non-violent and effective, with the decline of the Government it would be impossible for non-co-operators to preserve the social order and the result would be anarchy. This is why non-co-operation has to be practised by the people consistently with their ability to preserve the social order.

That the chief motive behind non-violent non-co-operation is not hatred or exclusiveness, but a constructive urge, is brought out in the following passage from *Young India*: "There is no doubt that non-co-operation is an education which is developing and crystalizing public opinion. And as soon as it is organized enough for effective action, we have *swaraj*."[59]

But the growth of this inward, co-operative aspect of non-co-operation must be voluntary. The satyagrahi must respect others' right of free opinion and free action and use only persuasion and argument to wean them from the wrong path. Forcing co-operation would be violence and violence only sustains and multiplies evil. Besides, voluntariness alone can be a test of "popular feeling and dissatisfaction",[60] and so "those who call themselves non-co-operators from fashion or compulsion are no non-co-operators."[61] Non-co-operation to be non-violent, therefore, demands toleration of differences and due regard for the dissentient's liberty.

The non-violent methods which satyagrahis may employ to develop the non-co-operation movement are *hartal*, social ostracism, and picketing.

Hartal means cessation of business as a measure of protest. The object of a *hartal* is to strike the imagination of the people and the Government.[62] But *hartals* should not be frequent, otherwise they would cease to be effective.[63] Besides, *hartals* should be absolutely voluntary. Abstention from work should be the result of persuasion and other non-violent methods of propaganda. Employees should not be asked to leave their work unless they receive permission from their employers.

59 *Satyagraha*, p. 24.

60 *Y. I.*, I, p. 149.

61 *Satyagraha*, p. 24.

62 *Y. I.*, I, p. 23.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 258.

Much more liable to abuse than *hartals* is social ostracism. Ostracism is violent or peaceful according to the manner in which it is practised. Gandhiji feels that in social life it is impossible to avoid ostracism to a certain extent, but it should not be used, except in a very limited sense, against blacklegs in a community who defy public opinion, and do not adopt non-co-operation.

In India social boycott is a terrible and effective age-old institution, an institution coeval with caste. It is based on the notion that a community is not bound to extend its hospitality to the excommunicated. It answered when every village was a harmonious self-contained unit and the occasions of recalcitrancy were rare. But in complex conditions of modern India when opinion is divided on the merits of satyagraha, a summary use of this weapon in order to bend a minority to the will of the majority is, according to Gandhiji, a species of unpardonable violence.[64]

Non-violent social ostracism may, however, be resorted to in certain extreme cases "when a defiant minority refuses to bend to the majority, not out of any regard for principle, but from sheer defiance or worse."[65] But it "is applicable and effective when it is not felt as a punishment and accepted by the object of the boycott as a measure of discipline." To be so accepted it must be non-violent, i.e., it must be civilized and must not savour of inhumanity. To be non-violent, "It must cause pain to the party using it, if it causes inconvenience to its object."[66]

Social boycott must not mean depriving a person of indispensable social services, e.g., asking his personal servant to give him up, stopping his food and cloth supply, depriving him of the services of a medical man, etc. To do so would amount to coercion and violence. Again, it would be an instance of violent ostracism if people in their impatience make the life of a person unbearable by insults, innuendoes and abuse. On the other hand, if a congregation refuses to recite prayers after a priest, who prizes his title above his honour, it would be an instance of peaceful ostracism. Similarly, there would be nothing violent if a person, who defies strong, clear public

[64] *Y. I.*, I, p. 299.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 298.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 300.

opinion on vital matters, is denied social amenities and privileges as against social services. Thus attendance at dinner parties and receiving of gifts are privileges which it is permissible to withhold. Even in this limited sense ostracism should be employed on rare and well-defined occasions and one who uses ostracism should, in every case, use it at his own risk.[67]

Picketing, when employed as a non-violent technique, should be only persuasive and never coercive. In the two non-violent movements of 1920-22 and 1930-34, Gandhiji advocated the picketing of liquor, opium and foreign-cloth shops. In the second movement this was almost exclusively done by women. But Gandhiji always discouraged picketing in the sense of sitting *dhurna*[68] or in the sense of forming a living wall of pickets in order to prevent the entry of persons into the picketed places. Gandhiji considers these forms violent. The object of peaceful picketing is not to block the path of a person wanting to do a particular thing but to rely on the force of public opprobrium and to warn and even shame the blacklegs.[69] Picketing should avoid coercion, intimidation, discourtesy, burning or burying of effigies, and hunger-strikes. Fasting has a place in picketing, only when it is resorted to in case of a breach of contract and when the parties respect and love each other.[70]

Non-co-operation, to develop which civil resisters employ the non-violent methods described above, culminates in civil disobedience. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1930, "A little reflection will show that civil disobedience is a necessary part of non-co-operation. You assist an administration most effectively by

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67 *Y. I.*, I, p. 302.

68 *Dhurna* means sitting down or lying flat on the ground so as to block the passage of those who defy public opinion and invite them to go to their work by treading on the bodies of those sitting or lying. *Dhurna* is a coercive method of social constraint. Gandhiji considers *dhurna* a barbarity and a species of violence. It is a barbarity, because it is a crude way of using coercion. It is even worse than violence, for "If we fight our opponent, we at least enable him to return the blow. But when we challenge him to walk over us knowing that he will not, we place him in a most awkward and humiliating position." *Satyagraha*, p. 90.

69 *H.*, August 27, 1938, p. 234.

70 *History of the Congress*, p. 765 (see Gandhiji's instructions regarding picketing in 1931).

obeying its orders and decrees."[71] Even the worst State may have some good points. But if the State is corrupt people should reject the entire system.[72]

The details of this withdrawal of co-operation would vary according to the peculiar situation of a country. What is essential is the ability of the non-co-operators to endure, without violence and malice, punishment and provocation coming from the Government and the solid backing of the masses whose collective pressure is an important requirement of success.

Any detailed history of Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement of 1920-22 is outside the scope of this book. We may, however, briefly notice the various items that he included in this movement which is the first instance of the use of the technique on a nation-wide scale.[73]

As originally planned by Gandhiji and accepted by the Khilafat Committee, non-co-operation was to be practised in "fixed, definite, progressive four stages", i.e., giving up of titles and resignation of honorary posts, calling out of Government servants, the withdrawal of the police and the military, and the suspension of taxes.[74] Later on the first stage was elaborated to include the boycott of courts by lawyers and the general public, of schools and colleges by teachers and students, of legislatures by those elected and of elections by voters. Another important item in the first stage was of promotion of *swadeshi* including the renunciation of all foreign cloth in favour of the exclusive use of *khadi*. The first stage also included resignations from nominated seats in local bodies, refusal to attend Government levees, *darbars* and other official or semi-official functions.

Every one of these negative steps was to be offset by its positive, constructive aspect so that by the time the

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[71] *Y. I.*, March 27, 1930.

[72] *Y. I.*, Dec. 31, 1931.

[73] In an embryonic form the doctrine of non-co-operation is present in Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj*. Thus, "We consider your (British) schools and law-courts to be useless. We want our own ancient schools and courts to be restored. We do not need any European cloth. We will manage with articles produced and manufactured at home....If you (the British) act contrary to our will, we will not help you, and, without our help, we know that you cannot move one step forward." *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 90-91.

[74] *Y. I.*, I, pp. 191-92.

Government was paralyzed the parallel satyagrahi Government should be ready to take its place and keep intact the social order. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1920, "...when we are ready to call out the military and the police on an extensive scale, we shall find ourselves in a position to defend ourselves. If the police and the military resign from patriotic motives, I would certainly expect them to perform the same duty as national volunteers....The movement of non-co-operation is one of automatic adjustment. If the Government schools are emptied, I would certainly expect national schools to come into being. If the lawyers as a whole suspended practice, they would devise arbitration courts and the nation will have expeditious and cheaper method of settling private disputes, and awarding punishment to the wrong-doer."[75] Again, "*Swaraj* by non-violent means can, therefore, never mean an interval of chaos and anarchy. *Swaraj* by non-violence must be a progressively peaceful revolution such that the transference of power from a close corporation to the people's representatives will be as natural as the dropping of a fully ripe fruit from a well-nurtured tree."[76] In 1946 he said, "A non-violent revolution is not a programme of 'seizure of power'. It is a programme of transformation of relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power."[77]

As for *swadeshi*, it automatically implies the boycott of those foreign commodities which are of universal use in a country and which must be locally produced. Foreign cloth is one such commodity, the boycott of which is an essential negative aspect of a non-violently planned economy. In 1920-22 Gandhiji advocated not only the boycott but also the destruction of foreign cloth and himself inaugurated cloth-burning in Bombay in July 1921.[78]

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[75] *Y. I.*, I, pp. 641-42.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

[77] *H.*, Feb. 17, 1946, p. 14.

[78] C. F. Andrews questioned the ethics of burning "the noble handiwork of one's fellowmen and women, one's brothers and sisters abroad". Such burning seemed to him "something violent, distorted, unnatural" which would lead the country back to the "old bad selfish nationalism of the racial type so rampant in Europe". *Y. I.*, I, pp. 555-58.

Gandhiji, however, defended the destruction as "a sound proposition from the highest moral standpoint". There was nothing racial or parochial about it because his emphasis was on foreign cloth and not British goods.

Non-co-operation was a new movement of its kind in India. There had been no adequate previous preparation for it in the form of constructive work among the masses. The people had no experience of sustained organized political action and had not yet imbibed the message of non-violence. Besides, from the very beginning violence seemed to haunt the movement at every step. Naturally therefore Gandhiji was anxious "to take the minimum risks and to call for the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object."[79]

Due to this political inexperience of the masses the beginning, Gandhiji said, should be made by the well-to-do classes and the masses should come in when later stages were reached. Besides, the first stage, with which the struggle commenced, mostly concerned the classes. The earlier stage was a way of preparing the masses for non-violent action. Gandhiji depended on the classes making a good beginning and the masses catching the spirit of non-violence and being led by the classes. For later stages his hope lay with the masses and these stages were to begin when the masses had been trained in non-violence. But the non-violence of the educated classes was only skin-deep because they had adopted the non-violent technique only as a measure of expediency. This was a serious handicap to the movement, for the classes with their halting, hesitating non-violence of the weak could hardly inspire the masses.

Being eager to avoid violence at any cost Gandhiji was naturally very cautious and slow about the later stages of non-co-operation. As regards calling out of Government servants he insisted that no pressure should be put upon any person to withdraw from Government service. Government servants were not to be called out until they were capable of supporting themselves and their dependents or the nation was in a position to find

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In fact, destruction was transferring racial ill-will of India from men to things. Love of foreign cloth had brought foreign domination and economic ruin and was therefore an emblem of slavery and a mark of shame. The motive of burning was not hate but repentance for past sin. Burning struck the imagination of the people as nothing else could and made them earnest. It stood for the burning of India's taste for foreign fineries and was like a surgical operation necessary for the deep-seated disease. He would not permit their being given to the poor in India, for such ill-conceived charity would be against their patriotism, dignity and self-respect. *Y. I.*, I, pp. 553-62.

[79] *Speeches*, p. 542.

occupation for such men. All classes were not to be called out at once. Private employees serving the English were not to be touched because the movement was not anti-English.[80] Gandhiji described the third stage, the withdrawal of the police and the military, a distant goal. The fourth, i.e., suspension of taxes, he considered still more remote. The organizers were not likely to embark upon it unless they could do so with the assurance that there will be no violence offered by the people.[81]

Later Gandhiji, the All India Congress Committee, and the Working Committee invited Government servants, even the police and the military, to resign and to support themselves by other occupations, spinning and weaving, for instance.[82] But on the whole Gandhiji followed a very cautious policy in regard to these two stages and intensive propaganda among the police, the military and other services was never carried on, the reasons being the inability of the Congress to support the servants called out and the fear of violence.

But though these two stages remained unrealized, suspension of taxes, in the beginning considered to be "still more remote", came very near being fulfilled. In 1921 the Government started intense repression to suppress the movement. As a reaction to this there arose in various provinces a demand for starting civil disobedience. In October 1921, the Working Committee authorized civil disobedience by individuals who might be prevented in the prosecution of the *swadeshi* propaganda.[83] On 5th November, 1921, the All India Congress Committee extended the scope of civil disobedience and permitted provinces on their own responsibility to undertake, in addition to individual civil disobedience, also mass civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes in selected districts or *tehsils* which conformed to the conditions concerning non-violence, communal unity, the adoption and manufacture of *khadi* and untouchability.[84] The movement was to start on the 7th February, 1922, in Bardoli. In the Madras Presidency, 100

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80 *Y. I.*, I, p. 191.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 1030. Resolution of the All India Congress Committee passed in July 1921; and the statement of the Working Committee dated 5th October, 1921. *History of the Congress*, pp. 361 and 366.

83 *History of the Congress*, p. 367.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 368.

villages in Guntur would have followed suit and the movement would have spread throughout the country.[85] In fact, in Guntur taxes had been withheld in anticipation of Gandhiji's sanction and not even five per cent of the taxes had been collected so long as the Congress ban was operative.[86] But the outburst of violence at Chauri Chaura, which had been preceded by violent scenes at Bombay, Madras and other places, led to the suspension of the mass civil disobedience. The sudden suspension disappointed the country, the Government intensified its repression, Gandhiji and other leaders were sent to jail and the movement slackened. In November 1922, on the recommendation of the Civil Disobedience Committee, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution that the country was not yet prepared for civil disobedience. By then 30,000 non-co-operators had gone to jail.[87]

The second civil resistance movement (1930-34) was predominantly a civil disobedience movement and began where the first movement (1920-22) had ended. This movement also adopted some important items of the earlier non-co-operation movement. Thus the boycott of schools, colleges and courts, of foreign cloth and liquor, invitation to Government officials to resign, calling out the legislators—all these were duly emphasized. The boycott of foreign cloth was very intense, widespread and effective. One noteworthy feature of this movement, so far as the technique of non-co-operation is concerned, was that after Gandhiji's arrest on May 4th 1930, the Congress undertook a vigorous boycott of British goods as well as British banking, insurance, shipping and other institutions.[88]

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85 Gandhiji's idea seems to have been that civil disobedience should be adopted by district after district when it had succeeded in Bardoli and the neighbourhood. Krishnadas reports him saying, "when the *swaraj* flag floats victoriously at Bardoli, then the people of the taluqa next to Bardoli, following in the steps of Bardoli, should seek to plant the flag of *swaraj* in their midst. Thus district after district, in regular succession, throughout the length and breadth of India, should the *swaraj* flag be hoisted." *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, I, p. 374.

86 *History of the Congress*, pp. 390-91 & 398.

87 Brailsford puts the number at 50,000. See *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 157.

88 Resolutions 11 and 12 of the Working Committee, May 1930, and Resolutions 1 and 2 of the Working Committee, June 27, 1930. See *History of the Congress*, p. 673 and 683-84.

Gandhiji had never countenanced such comprehensive boycott before. As we have pointed out in chapter IV he considered it punitive and, therefore, violent. This change was made in his absence and, maybe, without his approval. But immediately after his return from London, in January 1932, the Working Committee once again sanctioned this extension and it seems from some of his speeches and writings that Gandhiji agreed to it.[89] Besides, the Committee could not have disregarded the wishes of the general on the eve of the renewal of conflict. The relevant resolution was: "Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressors is perfectly lawful, inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore, boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted."[90]

Gandhiji, it seems, had come to believe that the economic boycott[91] can and should be used as a non-violent non-coercive measure of non-co-operation with the tyrant, the emphasis being on the moral aspect of the boycott. The difficulty arises from the fact that the boycott to be effective requires unanimity to achieve which the satyagrahi is tempted to use even questionable means of social constraint. Thus ill-will is aroused; the emphasis tends to shift from undertaking suffering to heaping it on the opponent; and the high idealism of satyagraha is toned down. On the other hand to carry on trade with the evil-doer is to co-operate with him and to be an accessory to his immorality. Besides, ill-will and violence can be minimized if satyagrahis are well disciplined.

Similarly by a resolution passed on June 27, 1930, the Working Committee called upon "the people to organize and enforce a strict social boycott of all Government officials and others known to have participated directly in the atrocities committed upon the people to stifle the national movement."[92] This

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[89] See *Nation's Voice*, pp. 207, 208 and 211; *Y. I.*, March 26, 1931, p. 37; and April 2, 1931, p. 57.

[90] *History of the Congress*, p. 870.

[91] For his views on the use of boycott against international aggression see Chap. XI *infra*.

[92] Resolution No. 3 of the Working Committee, June 27, 1930, *History of the Congress*, p. 684.

was passed during Gandhiji's absence in jail and was contrary to his views on social boycott discussed earlier in this chapter. On his return from the Round Table Conference the Working Committee modified its earlier instructions by reminding people that, "Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury on Government officers, police or anti-nationalists should not be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence."[93]

Civil disobedience is the logical conclusion, the last stage, the most drastic form of non-co-operation. Gandhiji calls it "a complete, effective and bloodless substitute of armed revolt."[94] The earlier stages of non-co-operation are a preparation for it. The effective use of the less drastic stages of non-co-operation against the Government is bound to bring the satyagrahi in conflict with the laws of the State.

Civil disobedience, being a quicker and more drastic remedy than the other stages of non-co-operation, is fraught with greater danger and requires to be handled much more cautiously. "By its very nature, non-co-operation is open to children of understanding and can be safely practised by the masses. Civil disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can therefore be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate."[95] Both these aim at paralyzing an unjust, immoral, i.e., undemocratic Government which opposes the declared will of the people and at replacing it by a satyagrahi system. Almost complete unanimity is necessary for the success of non-co-operation (i.e., its stages other than civil disobedience); while civil disobedience can neither be expected to be, nor need be, so widespread to be effective.

Gandhiji defines civil disobedience as "the breach of unmoral statutory enactments".[96] Civil disobedience, he says, signifies "the resister's out-lawry in a civil, i.e., non-violent manner".[96] Civil disobedience is really a synthesis of civility and disobedience, i.e., non-violence and resistance. Resistance to bad laws is essential for man's moral growth, while civility

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93 *History of the Congress*, p. 869.

94 *Y. I.*, I, p. 938.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 223.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

is the demand of a stable social order without which man's life and growth are not possible.

Disobedience is in itself destructive and anti-social. But obedience to an immoral law is even worse and can never be a duty. A law to be worthy of obedience must be moral and democratically formulated. Even in a democracy in extreme cases if a citizen cannot get an immoral law repealed through constitutional means, he should disobey the law in order to be loyal to his own conscience. This conflict of loyalty so rare in a democratic State is the constant feature of a satyagrahi's life in undemocratic States and in countries under foreign subjection. Disobedience to immoral laws of the State is really obedience to a higher moral law, the law of truth and justice. Civil disobedience is thus an effort to reconcile the demands of freedom and law.

But civil disobedience is a risky, delicate weapon and should be employed with the greatest caution and most sparingly. Says Gandhiji, ". . .its use must be guarded by all conceivable restrictions. Every possible provision should be made against an outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. Its area as well as its scope should also be limited to the barest necessity of the case."[97]

If its use is to be healthy and creative, greater emphasis should be laid on the adjective civil than on the substantive disobedience.[98] Civil is the very opposite of criminal, uncivil and violent. Criminal disobedience is licence, lawlessness and death even as civil disobedience is, freedom, growth and life. Civil means strictly non-violent.[99] "Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it."[100] Civility does not mean "mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good."[101] Disobedience is not civil if the object is embarrassment of the opponent or private material

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97 *Y. I.*, I, p. 944.

98 *H.*, April 1, 1939, p. 73; see also Barr, p. 56.

99 *Y. I.*, Jan. 2, 1930, p. 4.

100 *Y. I.*, I, p. 57.

101 *Autobiography*, II, p. 435.

gain in place of "self-suffering for securing relief".[102] It cannot be civil unless the resister has disciplined himself and the atmosphere around is tranquil and non-violent. This means that disobedience to be civil must have been preceded by civil obedience. As Gandhiji discovered in 1919 after Nadiad and Ahmedabad outbursts of violence, it is a Himalayan blunder to place the remedy of civil disobedience in the hands of those who lack the habit of willing obedience to law without fear of their sanctions. Those only attain the right to offer civil disobedience who have known how to offer voluntary and deliberate obedience to even irksome laws imposed by the State so long as they do not hurt their conscience or religion.[103] Over and above this spontaneous and intelligent obedience to the law of the State Gandhiji also demands of individuals and groups intending to offer civil disobedience to undergo a rigorous discipline through adequate practice of the constructive programme and acquire non-violent control over the general public. Resisters must be ready quietly to bear all punishments and stand all repression till the oppressor is tired and the object of the satyagrahi gained. Lastly disobedience to be civil must also be public and made especially known to those interested in arresting the satyagrahi.[104]

After the second civil resistance movement Gandhiji put very great stress on the need of adequate discipline as the precondition of civil disobedience. According to him, quality should be the prime consideration. Civil disobedience thus no doubt becomes "a very dear commodity". But such disobedience will be, according to him, infinitely more effective and faster-moving than the alloy which often passes for civil disobedience.

In civil disobedience if the beginning is properly made and discipline is adequate, mass disobedience continues to be nonviolent even in the later stages when leaders are all in jail and the movement is largely self-regulated.

Disobedience may be directed either against some particular unjust or immoral measures of a State or against the laws of a State in general. The object of civil disobedience in the former case is to compel a Government to withdraw an

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102 *Y. I.*, I, p. 39.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 932; *Autobiography*, II, Ch. XXXIII.

104 *H.*, April 1, 1939, p. 72.

unjust law or order, in the latter to paralyze a corrupt Government and to set up a non-violent State in its place. When directed against a particular wrong or evil civil disobedience can also be offered without regard to effect, by way of self-immolation to rouse local consciousness or conscience.[105] Such was the case in Champaran when Gandhiji offered civil disobedience without any regard to the effect and well knowing that the people might even remain apathetic.[105] The satyagraha of South Africa, Bardoli, and Kheda aimed at the relief of particular grievances. The individual civil disobedience of 1940-41 was against the restrictions imposed by the Government on freedom of speech in India. The movements of civil disobedience in Rajkot, Travancore, Jaipur and many other native States had as their object the wresting from the rulers' unwilling hands the right of self-government. The non-violent movements of 1920-22 and 1930-34 also aimed at destroying the British Government in India and setting up parallel satyagrahi institutions. Similarly the object of the non-violent mass struggle contemplated in the A.I.C.C. resolution of August 8, 1942 was the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India.

Whether the object be particular or general, laws to be disobeyed have to be selected with great discrimination. The satyagrahi may not break laws which lay down moral principles. He may disobey those laws which are harmful to the people. There are also laws which are neither good nor bad, moral nor immoral. These enable the Government to exercise its authority and are obeyed by the people for the supposed good government of the country. The breach of these will not harm the people but will immensely increase the work of the administration. It would be legitimate for the satyagrahi to disobey these laws, for an unjust Government loses its right to the obedience of the people. The laws selected should also be such that the largest number of people can participate in civil disobedience. Thus the authority of the State should be challenged in every way which does not involve violence or moral turpitude.[106] Gandhiji's choice of the salt law for the civil disobedience movement of 1930-34 was an ideal choice. Scores of

105 Mahatma Gandhi, *Constructive Programme*, p. 26.

106 *Speeches*, p. 458 and *H.*, March 18, 1939, p. 53.

other laws can be disobeyed and thus the existence of a corrupt State ignored and its authority denied.

Civil non-payment of taxes is one of the quickest methods of overthrowing a Government and holds out the temptation of ready response. But it is fraught with the greatest possibility of violence unless masses are "saturated with the principle of non-violence". This is why Gandhiji considers it as the last stage which should be tried only after other forms of civil disobedience. Civil non-payment is for those who have been in the habit of paying taxes regularly, understand the reason and virtue of civil non-payment, have acquired the necessary non-violent discipline and are prepared to stand, with calm resignation, the confiscation of their property.[107]

The selection of laws to be broken should be made not by each satyagrahi for himself but by the leader or some central body of experts. But for this restriction on individual liberty in the interest of discipline every satyagrahi may become a law unto himself and the result may be anarchy or criminal disobedience.[108]

Gandhiji draws a distinction between individual and mass civil disobedience and offensive or assertive and defensive civil disobedience. On February 25, 1922, the All India Congress Committee defined these aspects of civil disobedience thus:

"Individual Civil Disobedience is a disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or an ascertained number or group of individuals. Therefore a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no unauthorized admission is allowed is an instance of individual civil disobedience, whereas a prohibited public meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of mass civil disobedience. Such civil disobedience is defensive when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity, although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive if it is held not for any normal activity, but merely for the purpose of courting arrest and imprisonment."[109]

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107 *Y. I.*, I, pp. 947-51.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 1019.

According to Gandhiji, "The chief distinction between mass civil resistance and individual civil resistance is that in the latter every one is a complete independent unit and his fall does not affect the others; in mass civil resistance the fall of one generally adversely affects the rest. Again in mass civil resistance leadership is essential, in individual civil resistance every resister is his own leader. Then again, in mass civil resistance there is a possibility of failure; in individual civil resistance failure is an impossibility. Finally, a State may cope with mass civil resistance, no State has yet been found able to cope with individual civil resistance."[110] Gandhiji believes that civil disobedience is essentially an individual affair and so long as there is even one civil resister offering resistance, the movement of civil disobedience cannot die and must succeed in the end.[110]

"Aggressive, assertive or offensive civil disobedience is non-violent, wilful disobedience of laws of the State whose breach does not involve moral turpitude and which is undertaken as a symbol of revolt against the State. Thus disregard of laws relating to revenue or regulation of personal conduct for the convenience of the State, although such laws in themselves inflict no hardship, and do not require to be altered, would be assertive, aggressive or offensive civil disobedience."

"Defensive civil disobedience, on the other hand, is involuntary or reluctant non-violent disobedience of such laws as are in themselves bad and obedience to which would be inconsistent with one's self-respect or human dignity. Thus formation of volunteer corps for peaceful purposes, holding of public meetings for like purposes, publication of articles not contemplating or inciting to violence in spite of prohibitory orders, is defensive civil disobedience. And so is the conducting of peaceful picketing undertaken with a view to wean people from things or institutions picketed in spite of orders to the contrary."[111]

The right to offer aggressive civil disobedience accrues after severest discipline. The non-violent raids of 1930 on Government salt depots at Dharasana and Wadala by thousands

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[110] *Poona Statements* (the correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru), p. 11.

[111] *Y. I.*, I, p. 983.

of satyagrahis are instances of aggressive as well as mass civil disobedience.[112]

Gandhiji calls offensive civil disobedience "a most dangerous weapon".[113] Defensive civil disobedience is forced on the satyagrahi when he is not permitted to prosecute his ordinary peaceful activities or when insult and humiliation are imposed upon him. So it cannot be postponed and is always welcome. Indeed it is a duty which has to be done even if the opponent is in difficulty, for "An opponent in difficulty may not expect people to obey unjust or humiliating laws or orders."[114] Aggressive civil disobedience, whatever the object of satyagrahis, embarrasses and vexes the opponent and should be avoided if the latter is in difficulty.

But offensive civil disobedience obviously does not mean launching an offensive without any serious grievances. That would make disobedience criminal. Offensive civil disobedience only implies the violation of some particular law not because that law is in itself some striking provocation but because the satyagrahis have rebelled against the Government. Even offensive civil disobedience is undertaken to set right some serious injustice when all peaceful means have been exhausted and when it is clear beyond doubt that there is no escape from non-violent resistance.

Individual satyagraha when practised by a group is a corporate technique. Even in mass satyagraha Gandhiji started from a small beginning and gradually developed the movement. Though he led several mass civil disobedience movements he was conscious of the low moral tone of group behaviour. He distrusted mass emotions of the moment which are susceptible to suggestions inciting them to violence. Hence his great emphasis on adequate discipline as the pre-requisite of mass civil disobedience. In the absence of adequate discipline there is a great risk of the magnitude and excitement of a mass conflict leading resisters astray and of disobedience becoming

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112 The highest figure of satyagrahis in these non-violent raids stood at 15,000 in the mass action at Wadala on 15th June, 1930. *Mahatma Gandhi. The Man and His Mission*, cited above, pp. 134-35; Roy Walker, *Sword of Gold*, pp. 111 and 113. According to Gandhiji the Dharasana salt raid was "a perfect thing of its kind". *H.*, June 23, 1946, p. 189.

113 *Y. I.*, I, p. 987.

114 *H.*, January 6, 1940, p. 404.

violent. The risk is increased by the fact that, unlike individual civil disobedience which is often vicarious, for individuals undergo suffering to remove some grievance of the masses, mass civil disobedience is often selfish in the sense that participants expect personal gain from disobedience.[115]

In the anti-war satyagraha of 1940-41 Gandhiji evolved a new technique of individual satyagraha. It was designed to minimize violence and to bring into action the purest possible form of non-violence. He concentrated on quality and permitted quantity only so far as it did not compromise the former. The issue of the conflict was "the right to preach against war as war or participation in the present war", i.e., "the right to preach non-violence through non-violent means".[116]

He started the movement in October, 1940, as representative civil disobedience. In its original conception the movement was limited to two or three persons.[117] It was to be symbolic. In the middle of November, 1940, it was extended to those who held certain elective posts, i.e., the members of the Working Committee, the All India Congress Committee and of the central and provincial legislatures. Then in January, 1941, in the third stage, came the turn of the members of provincial and local Congress Committees. After them any member of the Congress who had signed the satyagraha pledge could offer civil disobedience. But nobody was obliged to court imprisonment merely as a matter of discipline.[118] The name of the satyagrahi had to be approved by Gandhiji and also the way of his offering civil disobedience.[119] Thus all the Congressmen could join the

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115 *Speeches*, p. 637.

116 *H.* October 20, 1940, p. 330.

117 B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *Gandhi and Gandhism*, I, p. 186 (Gandhiji's letter dated Nov. 20, 1940). For an account of the movement, see Roy Walker, *Sword of Gold*, pp. 184-85; and Rajendra Prasad, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, pp. 112-14.

118 *Gandhi and Gandhism*, I, p. 187.

119 According to Gandhiji the best and the easiest way was to repeat the following slogan to passers-by as the resister walked on in a particular direction until he was arrested: "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war

movement, though civil disobedience was to be offered not in mass formations but singly by specified individuals.

For offering satyagraha Gandhiji approved only the individuals who subscribed to non-violence not only as a means of winning the country's freedom and regulating relations between religious and social groups in the country but also in its application so far as possible in free India, and who implicitly followed the constructive programme as an integral part of non-violence. The satyagrahis were required to be habitual *khadi*-wearers and regular spinners and had to give details of spinning they had done. They were also required to be whole-time constructive workers and to keep a diary of their day's work. The selection of a candidate depended on the approval of his diary by Gandhiji. After a certain stage there was automatic selection: all the released satyagrahis offered satyagraha except those who stayed out due to their inability to continue.

In this movement Gandhiji ruled out mass action and the usual forms of non-co-operation in order not to embarrass the Government. Even this symbolic disobedience was an embarrassment to the Government, but Gandhiji held that civil disobedience in this case meant assertion of the right to speak against participation in this war or all wars. "If I cannot do even this much when the occasion demands it we might as well give up non-violence. Civil disobedience is the assertion of a right, which the law should give but it denies. If the performance of a duty caused embarrassment it cannot be helped."[120]

with non-violent resistance." The slogan was to be translated into the language of the province in which civil disobedience was to be offered. Gandhiji's preference for this method was due to the fact that it was harmless, economical and effective and rivetted attention on the single issue of war. Further the method reduced the movement to its simplest terms and prevented it from lapsing into mass civil disobedience. Gandhiji also advised the resisters to make it clear in their speech and action that they were neither pro-Fascism nor pro-Nazism but that they were opposed either to all war or at least to the war conducted on behalf of British Imperialism. They sympathized with the British in their effort to live but they wanted also to live themselves as members of a free nation and must not be expected to help Britain at the cost of their own liberty. See the instructions issued by Gandhiji to civil resisters in the movement of 1940-41, quoted *in extenso* in *Gandhi and Gandhism*, I, cited above, pp. 182-84.

120 Gandhiji's statement dated April 21, 1941. 23,223 satyagrahis participated in the movement. In December 1941 the Government released

Gandhiji did not intend the movement to create an appreciable impression upon the war effort. The movement was a moral endeavour to dissociate India from the war effort to which she was never invited to be a party and a token of the yearning of the Congress to achieve the freedom of the country through non-violent effort.[121] The excellence of the technique lay in the fact that the masses could participate in the movement and yet the risks of violence were minimized even at a time when feelings ran high.

As Gandhiji's life shows civil resistance can be kept at the highest level of non-violence if it is confined to "one person only and that one being the most versed in the science". This is why in 1934 Gandhiji suspended civil resistance for Congressmen, confining it to himself. This, he thought, would reduce the possibility of the decay of the civil disobedience movement to the minimum and make the movement stronger than before and capable of being easily handled both by the people and the Government.[121] Gandhiji's 'Do or Die' experiments in Noakhali, Calcutta and Delhi are also instances of how non-violence becomes very effective when restricted to one satyagrahi who is 'the most versed in the science'.

Hijrat, which means voluntary exile, is another form of collective as well as individual satyagraha. The emigration of the Plebeians to secure rights from the Patricians of Rome, the planned flight of the Israelites, Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Madina, the emigration of Puritan Fathers from England and of Doukhobors from Russia are some historic instances of *hijrat*, though all these are not cases of non-violent *hijrat*. People of Bardoli, Borsad and Jambusar in Gujarat employed the technique of mass *hijrat* in 1930 as a protest against the inhuman oppression of the Government directed against the no-tax campaign. These peasant satyagrahis migrated from the

the satyagrahis as a gesture of peace. Some observers suggest that towards the close of the year 1941 discontent grew among some sections of the Congress. These stood for a more active opposition to the British Government. There had also been on the part of some released satyagrahis reluctance to court rearrest. Besides, the Japanese reached very near India's borders and the Congress became preoccupied with the problems of self-sufficiency and self-defence. So the movement was not revived.

121 *Conversations*, p. 97.

Bombay province to the territory of the neighbouring Baroda state.[122]

Gandhiji recommends *hijrat* to those who feel oppressed, cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place and lack the strength that comes from true non-violence or the capacity to defend themselves violently.[123]

Thus if civil disobedience fires the blood-lust of the tyrant, and his terror and oppression become unbearable and are likely to make satyagrahis angry or weak, Gandhiji's suggestion to the latter is self-imposed exile from the tyrant's territory even at the cost of hearth and home and all other earthly belongings. But such a step should not be taken thoughtlessly as a dramatic gesture. It must be taken only when it so hurts the satyagrahi's moral being to submit to the tyrant's wrongdoing that he would rather die than lose his self-respect.[124]

Hijrat was his advice to the satyagrahis of Bardoli in 1928 and of Limbdi, Junagadh and Vithalgadh in 1939.[125] In 1935, he advised the Harijans of Kavitha to migrate, as the caste Hindus of the place were regularly terrorizing over them and this had caused extreme despondency among the Harijans.[126]

Obviously the bravest course for satyagrahis would be cheerfully to suffer the worst repression and melt the heart of the evil-doer. But this lacking, there is nothing wrong, dishonourable, or cowardly in self-imposed exile. It is the non-violent way out of an unbearble plight. As a form of non-co-operation the technique is of a very limited value when employed against a State. The State may not permit the migration of the people *en masse*. Even if it does, approximate unanimity, essential for the success of non-co-operation, is difficult in the case of *hijrat* due to man's innate love for his hearth and home. Within big States, however, minorities in particular areas, discontented with the dominant social group, may seek relief by intra-State migration.

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122 *History of the Congress*, pp. 701 & 706.

123 *H.*, February 3, 1940, p. 435; May 25, 1947, p. 162.

124 *H.*, May 20, 1939, pp. 133-34.

125 *Ibid.*, p. 133; *Y. I.*, III, pp. 1035-36.

126 *H.*, October 5, 1935, p. 268.

CHAPTER X

SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION

NON-POLITICAL CONFLICTS AND CRITICISM

The corporate technique discussed in the last chapter can be employed not only in political conflicts but also against economic, religious and social injustice.

All exploitation which is rooted in selfish, divisive ideas and attitudes implies co-operation between the victim and the victimizer. The responsibility for injustice lies not only on the latter but also on the former. The way out for the victim is to withdraw this co-operation and to appeal through voluntary suffering to the heart and the head of the opponent and thus help him to see his mistake and correct it. Gandhiji does not accept the belief that the exploïter is beyond reform. To him the exploiter, no matter whether a capitalist, a landlord or a religious fanatic, is essentially a man who cannot shake himself free of his spiritual nature and is always capable of conversion. Violent means, besides being the monopoly of the exploiter, would deepen antagonism and perpetuate exploitation. Exploitation and injustice can be ended only if the conflict is resolved on the constructive moral plane where the appeal of integrating suffering love can irresistibly act on the mistaken wrong-doer and the public opinion.

In modern conditions a non-violent struggle against exploiting economic or social groups will in all likelihood bring the non-violent resisters in conflict with the State and the conflict will assume political colour. Widespread social and economic injustice is a sure index of the undemocratic nature of the State. An undemocratic political system can only live by aligning itself with other exploiters in society. On a vital social or economic issue an undemocratic Government will, as a measure of self-preservation, try to keep down the non-violent aggrieved. So in broad outlines the technique of resistance will be the same whatever be the nature of the issue.

Gandhiji himself fought several non-violent battles on social and economic issues. The issue of his earliest non-violent direct action in South Africa was socio-economic in nature. It was a successful effort of the small Indian population, consisting

largely of labourers, to save itself from the tyranny of the dominant social group, the Europeans. Similarly the satyagraha at Vykom (in the Travancore State) was also successfully fought, under Gandhiji's guidance, to remove the social tyranny of the caste Hindus and vindicate the civil rights of the untouchables.

For a social group subjected to an unjust discriminating treatment the most effective way of redress is some form of non-violent resistance. Gandhiji often explained how violent social outbreaks, Hindu-Muslim riots and the like, could be quelled non-violently. To deal non-violently with communal disturbances he advocated, in 1938, the formation of peace brigades, i.e., corps of volunteers pledged to non-violence in thought, word and deed. In the case of a disturbance, if persuasion fails, Gandhiji expects these satyagrahis to act as shock troops and make an offering of themselves in the conflagration. They should cheerfully bend their heads to receive violent blows of the infuriated combatants and thus try to save the situation. But to be successful these satyagrahis must have qualified for this sacrifice by a long period of peace propaganda and of selfless constructive service of the various communities in the locality. In this service there should be no distinction between one's own co-religionists and others belonging to different faiths.[1]

Throughout his long public life in India Gandhiji strove hard to bring about communal unity. On a number of occasions he resorted to fasting to bring communal violence under control. In Noakhali, his technique was village-to-village pilgrimage to carry the message of peace and goodwill and fearlessness to the people. But the success of his fasts and other non-violent ways of establishing peace has to be understood in the context of his life of utterly selfless service of the masses over a long period.

On several occasions he advised the Jews and the Negroes to practise non-violent resistance against racial discrimination and other forms of injustice.[2]

Gandhiji believes that no issue is better suited for the

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[1] *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 215; July 13, 1940, p. 200; March 26, 1938, p. 54.

[2] *H.*, March 14, 1936, pp. 38, 40; Nov. 26, 1938, pp. 352-53; Dec. 17, 1938, pp. 381, 384; and May 27, 1939, p. 138.

exercise of the spiritual weapon of satyagraha than the religious.[3]

But satyagraha in pursuit of a religious as opposed to a mundane object calls for greater discipline and precision than ordinary satyagraha. In 1939, he laid down some conditions for this kind of satyagraha. According to him religious satyagraha should on no account be used as a cloak for advancing an ulterior political or mundane objective. The leader of this satyagraha should be a true man of God, preferably a *brahmachari*, who will compel the reverence and love even of the opponent by the purity of his life, the utter selflessness of his mission and the breadth of his outlook.[4] Everybody participating in the movement must be a believer and practiser of the particular religion the grievances of which are sought to be redressed. Satyagrahis must have absolute belief in *ahimsa* and God and must have equal respect and regard for the religious convictions and susceptibilities of those who profess a different faith from theirs. This satyagraha must not lay emphasis on numbers and external aid and avoid aggressiveness, demonstrations and show. It must above all be a process of self-purification.

During recent years there have been two instances of religious satyagraha in India—the satyagraha of Akali Sikhs (1921-24) in the Punjab and the Arya Satyagraha (1939) in the Hyderabad State. None of these had the advantage of Gandhiji's guidance. In fact Gandhiji disapproved of the methods, though not the objective, of Arya Satyagraha[5] which depended largely on outside aid and was of the passive resistance type.

The Satyagraha of Akali (reformist) Sikhs (1921-24) had the encouragement of Gandhiji. It was in the beginning a movement for the reform of *gurdwaras* which had large endowments. The Akalis came in conflict with the Government which supported the established *mahants* who controlled these funds. After a severe non-violent struggle the Government had to yield and to recognize the right of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, elected by the Sikhs, to the possession of the historic *gurdwaras*.

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3 *H.*, April 27, 1939, p. 143.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

5 *H.*, August 19, 1939, p. 241.

As for the economic sphere, non-violence and the related principle of non-possession rule out exploitation, capitalism and the *zamindari* system. The land should belong to the actual cultivator and no cultivator should have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living.[6] Production should be on the basis of cottage industries carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. The indispensable large-scale production should be nationalized and should be managed jointly by the State and the representatives of workers.[6] But this goal cannot be reached in a day, and exploitation, capitalism and landlordism are hard realities of modern economic life.

Gandhiji's way to deal with economic conflicts is not class struggle and the extermination of haves by have-nots but class-collaboration and class-co-ordination as the first step towards the classless democracy in which every one will perform some form of productive physical labour and there will be no exploiters. He does not consider class-struggle to be inevitable and is against the extermination of the capitalist and the *zamindar* because no human being is beyond redemption even as "no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil." He does not believe that the capitalists and landlords are all exploiters by an inherent necessity and that there is irreconcilable antagonism between their interest and those of the masses. In many of the States of the Indian Union legislation has been enacted to abolish the *zamindari* system. Gandhiji however held that there would be no need to expropriate the *zamindars* if their mentality changed and if they worked as trustees of peasants, and removed the terrible inequality between themselves and peasants.[7] Trusteeship which is the negation of the right of private property could be brought about by the method of non-violent resistance which would either mend or else destroy the system without harming the *zamindars*.[8] "He (the peasant) has so to work as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him."[9]

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6 *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 96. The article entitled "Jaiprakash's Picture".

7 *H.*, April 23, 1938, p. 85.

8 *Y. I.*, November 26, 1931.

9 Gandhiji's statement dated Oct. 27, 1944. In June 1942, Gandhiji conceded that land must be confiscated without compensation, it being financially

The question of legislative expropriation assumed importance only after India gained political freedom. But even for the redress of serious agrarian grievances non-violent resistance is an unfailing remedy in the hands of farmers. Champaran (1917), Kheda (1918) and Bardoli (1928) are some of the instances of successful non-violent direct action in the agrarian sphere. The issue of Champaran satyagraha which Gandhiji considers as the most perfect demonstration of non-violence[10] was the unbearable hardships and oppressive exactions to which the peasants were subjected by indigo planters. In the end the Government had to remove the grievances which had not been redressed for a hundred years. The Kheda satyagraha was undertaken by Gandhiji for getting the revenue assessment for the year suspended due to crop-failure. The Bardoli satyagraha, a model of intensive organization and thorough planning, was undertaken by 88,000 peasants under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to protest against the Government's arbitrary unwarranted enhancement of land revenue. The Government with all its mighty resources and in spite of a frightful reign of terror failed to crush the no-tax campaign and had to yield to practically all the demands of the satyagrahis. The Government had also to restore the forfeited lands of the satyagrahis which had been sold out and to reinstate the village officials who had resigned in protest.

Similarly Gandhiji believes that the capitalist can render useful service to society if he can rise to real paternal or fraternal attitude towards labour and raise the latter to the status of co-proprietor of his wealth.[11] Both labour and capital should act as mutual trustees and trustees of consumers.[12] If both these

impossible to compensate landlords. He also held that in a free India peasants would seize the land and this process may even involve some violence. (See Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, pp. 54, 90-91). In 1934 also he had expressed the opinion that if it was unavoidable he would support confiscation by the State with the minimum exercise of violence. (See N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, pp. 201-02). Ideally non-violence rules out forcible ejection of landlords by peasants. (See Gandhiji's statement, Oct. 27, 1944). But Gandhiji was no doctrinaire and to him man and his happiness were the supreme consideration.

[10] *H.*, April 4, 1939, p. 332.

[11] *Y. I.*, III, p. 736.

[12] *H.*, June 25, 1938, p. 162.

act as trustees and view their interests in the context of the larger interests of the community, industrial conflicts will become infrequent and lose much of their bitterness.

He held that as a rule labour discharged its obligations more effectively and more conscientiously than the capitalists and that it should learn how to impose its will on the capitalists and to demand its own terms.[13] Labour should have a right to share in the administration and control of industry, and to adequate leisure, wholesome conditions of life, a living wage and full rights of citizenship.

For removing legitimate grievances labour should resort to non-violent strikes to compel capital to submit to arbitration. But the non-violent strike should not be confused with its Western prototype. The latter is non-violent in appearance rather than spirit. Hatred and the desire to subdue the opponent make the Western type of strike an instance of what Gandhiji calls passive resistance. Strikers in the West use the control over labour supply to coerce the capitalist into submission. Some Western critics of the strike, who question its ethical validity, consider it a means of coercion rather than persuasion and conversion. Thus to Dr John H. Holmes the strike "is revolt in terms not of suffering but of conquest". It is, according to him, developing "into a weapon of violence used in the spirit and to the ends of war".[14]

The satyagrahi strike seeks, on the other hand, to be non-violent in spirit as well as method. It is voluntary, purificatory suffering undertaken to convert the erring opponent. The important conditions of a successful non-violent strike are as under:[15]

(1) The cause of the strike must be just.

(2) Strikers should never resort to violence.[16]

(3) They should never molest blacklegs.

(4) They should be able to maintain themselves during the period of strike without falling back upon union

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[13] *Speeches*, p. 785; *H.*, July 3, 1937, p. 161.

[14] Quoted by C. M. Case in *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 297.

[15] For the conditions see *Autobiography*, II, pp. 412-13 and *Y. I.*, I, pp. 730-41.

[16] Gandhiji permits non-violent picketing (discussed in Ch. IX above) in the course of strikes.

funds and should therefore occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation. They should never depend upon alms.

(5) They should remain firm, no matter how long the strike continues. Unless labourers find their own support rather than depend on the resources of the union, the strike cannot be prolonged indefinitely and "no strike can absolutely succeed which cannot be indefinitely prolonged."[17]

(6) There should be practical unanimity among the strikers.

(7) A strike is no remedy when there is enough substitute labour to replace strikers. In that case, in the event of unjust or inadequate wages or the like, resignation is the remedy.

(8) Workers should on no account strike work without the consent of their union.

(9) Strikes should not be risked without previous negotiations with the millowners on the basis of an unalterable minimum demand.

Gandhiji is against sympathetic strikes. He believes that a non-violent strike should be limited to those who are labouring under the grievance to be redressed. This is only the application of Gandhiji's principle of non-dependence on external aid to economic conflicts. If the object is conversion and not embarrassment or coercion the only suffering that will be effective is self-suffering. In some rare instances, however, sympathetic strikes do become a duty. Thus if the masters of one factory combine with those of another in which workers are on strike due to a legitimate grievance, it is the duty of the workers in the former factory to combine with the strikers.[18]

Gandhiji is also against labour strikes for political purposes until labourers understand the political condition of the country and are prepared to work for the common good. This should not be expected of them unless they have bettered their own condition and have learnt how to secure the redress of their own just grievances. To precipitate labour strikes from a political motive

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17 *Speeches*, pp. 786-87.
18 *Y. I.*, II, p. 953.

so long as labour is politically ignorant is to exploit labour and to embarrass the Government and both are species of violence. The politics of labour "should be of its own free choice and its political activity should be in the service of a clearly understood and consciously accepted purpose."[19]

Ordinarily strikes should take place for the direct betterment of labourers. When labourers have acquired the spirit of patriotism, strikes may also take place for preventing profiteering on the part of capitalists, regulation of prices and the maintenance of proper proportion between prices, dividends and wages.[20] Strikes should be few and far between and as labour becomes more organized arbitration should replace strikes. In Ahmedabad Gandhiji demonstrated how the principle of arbitration can work to the benefit of labour as well as capital.

Successful use of the methods of strike and arbitration requires well-organized labour unions which will make workers conscious of their strength. But this organization must be along non-violent lines. It must be grounded in a firm faith in the possibility of co-ordination between labour and capital. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, which worked under the guidance of Gandhiji, is essentially a non-violent labour organization. It has been the most powerful labour union in the country. One of the objects of the Association is to secure the nationalization of the textile industry in due course.[21] Many Western observers, e.g., Harold Butler, Brailsford, Tom Shaw, Gilbert Slater, etc., have admired the indigenous character of the Association and its system of joint arbitration and conciliation fostered by the influence of Gandhiji.

In the case of failure of arbitration the constitution of the Association provides for recourse to a strike. The Association has conducted a number of strikes also and with gratifying results in most cases. Gandhiji's stress on the vital importance of internal improvement in genuine social change finds expression in comprehensive work of the Association for the welfare

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19 G. L. Nanda, "Gandhian Way in the Labour Movement" in the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Sept. 24, 1944.

20 *Y. I.*, I, pp. 737-41.

21 This object was adopted by the Association in 1926 at the instance of Gandhiji.

of labour.[22] To build up the non-violent strength of the worker the Association explores all the avenues of his uplift and keeps in close touch with almost every aspect of his life. Since 1937 the Association has also been training its members in a supplementary occupation in addition to their principal occupation in the mills so that in case of a lock-out or strike or loss of employment otherwise they will have something to fall back upon instead of being faced with the prospect of starving.[23] If Gandhiji had his way he would regulate all the labour organizations of India after the Ahmedabad model.[24]

Satyagraha as corporate action has been subjected to severe criticism. It is sometimes decried as destructive of law and order, unprogressive and unconstitutional.

Civil resistance would be destructive of social order and unprogressive if it were criminal law-breaking. But the two are poles apart. The criminal or the ordinary law-breaker breaks the law surreptitiously and tries to avoid the penalty. The civil resister is law-abiding not because he fears punishment but because he considers the law good for social welfare. He openly and civilly breaks a law if it is so unjust as to offend his moral sense and if all his efforts to get it modified fail, and then he quietly accepts the punishment. Indeed his disobedience itself is rooted in the satyagrahi's law-abiding nature which extracts from him implicit obedience to the highest law, i.e., the voice of conscience which overrides all other laws.[25] Criminal disobedience no doubt leads to anarchy. But civil resistance, though it aims at destroying immoral laws and an unjust order, neither creates lawlessness nor is unprogressive.

While fighting against injustice, untruth and exploitation which give rise to disorders and conflicts civil resistance evolves a superior, just social order based on truth and non-violence. Thus it minimizes, instead of giving rise to, lawlessness.

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[22] According to Brailsford the Association was "the centre of workers' social life, and it carried on a big range of activities which in Europe fall to the Municipality or the State....It published a weekly paper and ran a cinema, a reading room, a circulating library, five gymnasiums and a choir. It had a hospital, two dispensaries and no less than 23 schools." *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 124.

[23] *H.*, July 3, 1937, p. 161.

[24] Gandhiji, *Constructive Programme*, p. 21.

[25] *Speeches*, pp. 457 and 504-05.

Besides, even if civil resistance caused a slight loosening of social order, it is necessary to remember, as some social thinkers point out, that phenomena like duelling, smuggling, crime, litigation, evasion of unpopular taxes etc. are social realities against which law is helpless and which form whole blanks rather than single cases with which the Rule of Law is interspersed.[26] Some loosening of social cohesion is an essential feature of transition to new and fuller forms of social life and should not be confused with social dissolution and anarchy.

As for its being unconstitutional or otherwise, believers in the theory of absolute sovereignty hold that laws of the State are the highest arbiter of the conduct of the citizen irrespective of the conformity of the laws to the general interests of the community. They inculcate an absolute obligation of submission to the State and consider as unconstitutional any claim of moral right against its laws. The validity of the absolutist view is questioned by pluralists and others. To many of these thinkers the problem of political obligation is essentially moral; the State possesses no peculiar merit; and its right to the allegiance of the citizen is dependent on the moral adequacy of its laws. "Our first duty," Laski writes, "is to be true to our conscience."[27]

To Gandhiji also the question of political obligation is essentially moral and "disobedience to the law of the State becomes a peremptory duty when it comes in conflict with the law of God."[28] According to him, satyagraha will be unconstitutional "when truth and its fellow self-sacrifice become unlawful."[29] He holds that "It is contrary to our manhood, if we obey laws contrary to our conscience. . . .So long as the superstition that man should obey unjust laws exists so long will their slavery exist."[30] "Submission to a State law wholly or largely unjust is an immoral barter for liberty."[31]

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[26] Carl Brinkman, *Recent Theories of Citizenship* and C. E. Merriam, *Political Power*, Ch. VI.

[27] H. J. Laski, *The Grammar of Politics*, p. 289.

[28] *Ethical Religion*, p. 47.

[29] *Y. I.*, III, p. 1043.

[30] *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 70-71.

[31] *Y. I.*, Nov. 10, 1921, quoted in *H.*, March 5, 1950, p. 11.

Gandhiji would consider the Governmental machinery itself as unconstitutional if it is undemocratic and rooted in injustice and exploitation. Civil resistance is the most constitutional and sacred duty of the people towards such a Government.[32]

Even from the point of view of absolutists persuasion to educate public opinion is everywhere considered constitutional, and non-violent direct action is the most effective form of persuasion, being the appeal of the suffering love to the head through the heart. In the words of Gandhiji, "Satyagraha is the greatest means of educating the public and awakening the people."[33] Even if the satyagrahi is mistaken, his resistance harms none but himself, for he proceeds by self-suffering. His opposition to the established order is moral and not physical. It is an effort to convince the opponent rather than destroy him.

Further, every law gives the individual the option either to obey the law or in the alternative to suffer the penalty for disobedience. In the case of immoral laws or if the Government is corrupt the satyagrahi chooses the second alternative and willingly accepts the punishment imposed by the State.[34]

As is well known the Magna Charta and the Declaration of the Rights of Man legalized the right to resist the State under certain circumstances. Chapter 61 of the Magna Charta, which is still, in the words of Hallam, the keystone of English liberty, appointed a committee of 25 barons with the recognized right of resistance to the king as a means of enforcing the provisions of the charter.[35]

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[32] *Speeches*, p. 532; *Y. I.*, p. 938.

[33] *H.*, Oct. 30, 1949, p. 293.

[34] *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 70-71.

It may be pointed out that General Smuts, Gandhiji's adversary in South Africa, considered the satyagraha movement there as a constitutional movement. *Speeches*, p. 480. Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, also approved of Gandhiji's satyagraha in South Africa. Charles E. Merriam describes Gandhiji's system of civil disobedience as being "within the borders of legality". See his *Political Power*, p. 174. Sir Stafford Cripps considers as legitimate the use of general strike by the working class in a democracy under certain conditions. C. R. Attlee holds that in the absence of democratic means of redress resort to unconstitutional, even violent, means to bring about fundamental change is inevitable. Richard Acland (ed.), *Why I am a Democrat*, contributions by C. R. Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps.

[35] Gniest holds that the resistance conceded in Chapter 61 was in

If the absolutist attitude which swears by the sanctity of the constitution irrespective of its nature and of the quality of governmental activity were to be accepted as valid, Government would become the sole judge of what people ought to think, all democratic movements would be ruled out in undemocratic countries and political progress would become impossible. The right to resist the State is, indeed, the sovereign remedy in the hands of the oppressed to put an end to the tyranny of unjust rulers. It is the best guarantee of constitutional Government. That is why history has never condemned as unconstitutional successful instances of even violent rebellions. Gandhiji, however, does not consider as constitutional the wresting of justice by violent means. According to him, injustice cannot be cured by violence.

Civil resistance is undoubtedly dangerous for an autocratic State, but it is harmless to a democracy which is willing to submit to public opinion. It educates and strengthens public opinion and sets right abuses. It is "the purest type of constitutional agitation". To Gandhiji "Civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man . . . to put down civil disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience."[36] Similarly suppression of non-co-operation would amount to co-operation by coercion.

No doubt democracy diminishes the need for civil resistance. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1947, "Satyagraha, civil disobedience and fasts had restricted use in democracy. They could not even think of them whilst the Governments were

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harmony with the legal conceptions of the feudal State of the Middle Ages based on compact. (Rudolph Gniest, *History of the English Constitution*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, pp. 306-07). Commenting on Chapter 61 Adams observes, "The feudal law of Western Europe recognized the right of the vassal to renounce his allegiance and to make war on his Lord to protect himself from injustice. In no such case could he be charged with treason. The barons were at the moment acting upon this right. . . ."The Magna Charta, according to Adams, lays down two fundamental principles which lie at the present day, as clearly as in 1215, at the foundation of the English Constitution, and of all constitutions derived from it. First that "There is a body of law in the state, of rights belonging to the subjects or to the community, which the King is bound to regard;" and second, that "if the King will not regard these rights he may be compelled by force, by insurrection against him, to do so." G. B. Adams, *Constitutional History of England*, pp. 129-30 and 137-39.

36 *Y. I.*, I, p. 943.

settling down and the communal distemper was still stalking from one province to another."[37] In 1944 he said, "civil disobedience and non-co-operation are designed for use when people . . . have no political power. But immediately they have political power, naturally their grievances, whatever their character, will be ameliorated through legislative channels. . . . If the legislature proves itself to be incapable of safeguarding the *kisans'* interests they will of course always have the sovereign remedy of civil disobedience and non-co-operation."[38]

Most modern States are either undemocratic or at best democratic in form rather than in spirit. But even in a predominantly non-violent State non-violent resistance will be morally justified. Such a society may minimize the need of direct action. But the mode of human association will always admit of continuous growth, and so there will always be room for the use of suffering love as the best means of perfecting social life.

In 1930 he wrote, "I know that if I survive the struggle for freedom, I might have to give non-violent battles to my own countrymen which may be as stubborn as that in which I am now engaged."[39] According to him, "Real home rule is possible only where passive (non-violent) resistance is the guiding force of the people."[40] Describing his idea of village *swaraj* he writes, "Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community."[41]

Non-violent direct action is often mistaken for an unconstitutional method, for it is regarded to be coercive as against constitutional methods which depend on persuasion. The critics of non-violent resistance reject as unreal any distinction between the effects, on the adversary, of violent and non-violent actions. To them non-violence is a form of coercion. Some of its advocates also argue that because non-violence is a form of coercion, injustice should be fought non-violently so far as possible and violently when necessary.

Thus Arthur Moore considers satyagraha as "mental violence" and "a method of fighting which is open to unarmed

37 *H.*, Sept. 7, 1947, p. 316.

38 Gandhiji quoted in N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, pp. 79-80.

39 *Y. I.*, Jan. 30, 1930, p. 37.

40 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 74; *Y. I.*, Jan. 30, 1930, p. 37.

41 *H.*, July 25, 1942, p. 238.

people" and which "is not a distinctively spiritual weapon any more than is armed rebellion or war." He rejects the claim that satyagraha is on a high ethical plane or that it is applied Christianity or something nobler still.[42] C. M. Case differentiates between persuasive suffering and coercive suffering. The former is the passive resistance of the olden type which seeks to produce in the mind of the one appealed to a change of mental attitude without the use of coercion. Non-co-operation, strike and boycott are, according to him, forms of coercive suffering. Coercion, he says, may be either moral or physical. Non-co-operation, strike and boycott are instances of coercion because in them suffering is self-inflicted with the express purpose of producing a dilemma in the mind of the opponent. Neither of these alternatives appeals to the opponent's desire or his judgment, yet he is compelled by the situation to choose between them. No act or threat of physical force or violence is used against him on the one hand, nor is he persuaded of the excellence of either alternative on the other. Whichever he accepts of the alternatives he remains unconvinced. Thus he is coerced, though non-violently coerced.[43] Jawaharlal Nehru also believes that non-violence coerces as well as violence, sometimes even more terribly.[44]

Arthur Moore's denial of the moral superiority of satyagraha rests on his mistaken view that satyagraha is "mental violence". To Gandhiji mental violence will turn an apparently non-violent act into *duragraha* or passive resistance.

Gandhiji would accept Case's distinction between persuasive and coercive suffering, but he would not put satyagraha in the coercive category. Case puts non-violent non-co-operation in the same group with strike and boycott as practised in the West. His treatment of strike and boycott makes it abundantly clear that these are non-violent, not in Gandhiji's sense, but only in appearance.[45] Gandhiji considers boycott and strike, as practised in the West, examples of passive resistance and not satyagraha. The two, i.e., satyagraha on the one hand, and boycott

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[42] S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 192-93.
[43] C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 402.
[44] See his *Autobiography*, p. 539.
[45] C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 295-346.

and strike as forms of passive resistance on the other, resemble in so far as they avoid physical violence, but there is vital difference between these two agencies of social pressure and the effects of the two are sufficiently distinct to be indicated by separate terms.

The most important difference between these two is that satyagraha seeks to avoid not only physical but also mental violence on moral considerations, while strike and boycott as forms of passive resistance avoid physical violence on grounds of expediency. Thus in satyagraha the motive must not be violent, while boycott and strike confine themselves to the external act, ignore the motive and, short of openly resorting to physical force or its threat, use all the forms of social constraint.[46] As a result of this difference in satyagraha the brunt of suffering is borne by the satyagrahi, in boycott and strike the incidence of suffering is reversed. In strike and boycott none of the alternatives, i.e., the demand of the resisters and the pressure they exert, appeals to the opponent's judgment and he has to choose between the two evils.[47] In satyagraha the demand is kept so transparently, so unquestionably, legitimate and morally conducive to the welfare of both the parties that even when the opponent, under the stress of self-interest, resists the satyagrahi's demand he is conscious of the intrinsic moral correctness of the latter's demand and behaviour. Thus the satyagrahi wins by sapping the moral defences of the opponent, and the pressure of his resistance, though it is compelling, is persuasive. Strike and boycott, on the other hand, frighten the opponent by the prospect of suffering and loss and coerce him. The effect of satyagraha is non-violent moral pressure which is unifying and elevating, while the effect of boycott and strike is psychic violence which is divisive and morally degrading.

The effect of boycott and strike, unless they eschew all violence, may rightly be called psychic or non-physical coercion. It, however, creates confusion of thought and is unscientific to put these two distinct social forces, i.e., satyagraha and passive resistance (boycott and strike), in the same category.

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[46] For the difference between satyagraha and passive resistance also see above, pp. 127-28.

[47] C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 318.

It is incorrect to describe the effects of non-violent direct action even as non-violent or moral coercion. In common as well as political parlance the term 'coercion' usually signifies compulsion by the use of physical force or by the threat of its use. As interpreted by dictionaries also the term is associated with physical violence.[48] Violence stands for exploitation of men and their use as mere means which is ruled out by non-violence. Due to its association with physical violence, the use of the term 'coercion' to indicate the effect of non-violent resistance gives the wrong impression that violent resistance and non-violent resistance are essentially indistinguishable. It also hinders clear, accurate thinking.

We have distinguished above between moral pressure of non-violence and non-physical coercion of passive resistance. There is even greater difference between non-violent pressure and physical coercion. Gandhiji explains the difference between the two forces and their respective reactions thus: "Violent pressure is felt on the physical being and it degrades him who uses it as it degrades the victim, but non-violent pressure exerted through self-suffering, as by fasting, works in an entirely different way. It touches not the physical body but it touches and strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is exerted."[49]

In his speeches and writings Gandhiji always disclaims coercion and compulsion as elements in satyagraha. We quote here a few relevant passages from his writings:

"We cannot organize public opinion in a violent atmosphere...those who call themselves non-co-operators from

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48 According to Webster's *Dictionary* "coercion" means "the application to another of such force, either physical or moral, as to induce or constrain him to do against his will something that he would not otherwise have done." *The Oxford English Dictionary* and *A New English Dictionary* (edited by Sir James Murray) emphasize the association of violence with "coercion". According to them "to coerce" means "to constrain or restrain (a voluntary or moral agent) by the application of superior force, or by authority resting on force; to constrain to compliance or obedience by forcible means; to keep in order by force..."; "coercion" means "constraint, restraint, compulsion, the application of force to control the action of a voluntary agent...; government by force as opposed to that which rests upon the will of the community."

49 Quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru in his Autobiography, p. 537.

fashion or compulsion are no non-co-operators. . . .We must therefore eliminate compulsion in any shape from our struggle."[50]

"We must not resort to social boycott of our opponents. It amounts to coercion. . . .The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is intolerable as that of bureaucratic minority."[51]

"But there should be no coercion in khaddar-wearing as in any thing else."[52]

During the civil disobedience movement of 1930 he wrote, "We may not use compulsion even in the matter of doing a good thing. Any compulsion will ruin the cause. . . .This is a movement of conversion, not of compulsion even of the tyrant."[53]

"There is no such thing as compulsion in the scheme of non-violence. Reliance has to be placed upon the ability to reach the intellect and the heart."[54]

"Non-violence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion."[55]

"The satyagrahi's object is to convert, not coerce, the wrong-doer."[56]

But though he avoids the use of the words "coercion" and "compulsion", he does employ the word "compel" to indicate the effect of satyagraha. By "compelling" he means exerting moral pressure or influence with the object of evoking the best.

Thus in 1920 referring to the Viceroy's speech in the legislature he wrote, "The remarks on the Punjab mean a flat refusal to grant redress. . . .The immediate future is to compel repentance on the part of the Government on the Punjab matter."[57]

Again, "I have therefore ventured to suggest the remedy of non-co-operation. . .which, if it is unattended by violence and undertaken in an ordered manner, must compel it (the Government) to retrace its steps and undo the wrongs committed."[58]

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50 *Satyagraha*, pp. 24-25.
51 *Y. I.*, I, p. 961.
52 *Y. I.*, II, p. 507.
53 *Y. I.*. April 17, 1930.
54 *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.
55 *H.*, July 8, 1939, p. 193.
56 *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.
57 *Y. I.*, I, p. 133.
58 *Ibid.*, p. 220.

"...each party helping the other, we shall compel the Government to accede to the minimum joint demands of all the parties."[59]

Even the word "compel" is an ambiguous word. A more precise term that Gandhiji sometimes uses to indicate the effect of non-violence is "moral pressure". Thus referring to his Rajkot fast he said, "If my fast, which I hope will be avoided, is to be interpreted as pressure, I can only say that such moral pressure should be welcomed by all concerned."[60]

No doubt the three kinds of social restraint, i.e., non-violence, non-physical violence and physical violence shade off into one another in marginal cases and the line of demarcation gets blurred and is difficult to discern. But to describe the effects of non-violence by the term "coercion" which is associated with violence is unscientific and leads to confusion. Thus people sometimes argue that both non-violence and violence are forms of coercion and when one fails the other may be employed. We suggest that the effects of the three kinds of resistance may be termed as moral pressure in the case of non-violence, non-physical coercion in the case of passive resistance and coercion in the case of violence.

Critics often question the universal applicability of corporate non-violence to all group conflicts. They point out that the moral tone of the behaviour of groups, specially large ones, is extremely low. Under excitement of emotions masses lose all restraint and cannot be depended upon to resort to direct action against the exploiters without being provoked into retaliation. Thus corporate non-violent action is an impossibility.[61]

Gandhiji is fully alive to the facts that groups may be less responsive to moral considerations than individuals and that it may be far more difficult for large groups of men than for individuals to acquire the necessary non-violent discipline. But he does not discount the possibility of large groups being trained in the way of non-violence. He refuses to believe that non-violence is only for the individual and that non-violence on mass scale is against human nature.[62] He maintains that non-violence

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[59] *Y. I.*, II, p. 260.
[60] *H.*, March 11, 1939, p. 46.
[61] M. Ruthnaswamy, *The Political Philosophy of Mr Gandhi*, pp. 57-58.
[62] *Y. I.*, Jan. 2, 1930; *H.*, Oct. 12, 1935, p. 277.

can be exercised by individuals as well as by groups, even by millions together.[63]

The weakness of large masses of men for violence is due to lack of self-control and discipline on the part of the members of these groups and of the non-violence of the brave in the leaders. With well-planned, thorough-going discipline spread over a long period and with the right type of leaders this weakness for violence can be brought under control. The fact that it is possible to train effectively large groups for violent warfare shows that they can be trained for non-violent group action also. Military training aims at controlling and disciplining the emotion of fear and the corresponding urge to flight. These are closely allied to the parallel emotion of anger and the urge to pugnacity. Both of these are divisive. Fear is aroused by the stronger adversary and anger by the weaker. The non-violent training involves a thorough control of these divisive emotions and urges.

The existence and progress of mankind show that love, co-operation and allied non-violent attitudes preponderate over anger, fear and other violent emotions and attitudes. Non-violent discipline should be more in consonance with human nature and, therefore, easier to practise and more enduring than military discipline.[64]

That large masses of men can be disciplined to act non-violently under the gravest provocation is proved by successful instances of mass action at Dharasana, Bardoli, in the Frontier Province and South Africa.

According to Gandhiji the discipline which is the moral pre-requisite of collective satyagraha can be acquired by every individual and does not require a high level of culture or education or any other extraordinary capacity. That the backward unlettered Indian coolies of South Africa, the peaceful peasants of Bardoli, and the ferocious, warlike Pathans of the Frontier Province alike made well-disciplined soldiers of

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[63] *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 403.

[64] One important factor in group behaviour is what Professor Giddings calls "the consciousness of kind". This group consciousness or group solidarity sustains and reinforces for better or worse individual sentiments. The individual as a member of the group with which his sentiments tally can not only inflict but also undertake suffering more easily than he can as an isolated individual. Thus non-violence can also benefit from what may be called "group contagion".

Gandhiji's non-violent army is ample evidence of the validity of his claim.

After a thorough investigation of historical and biographical facts concerning passive resisters and of psychological and statistical evidence concerning "conscientious objectors" C. M. Case has arrived at the conclusion that both these classes of people are entirely normal in their native physical and mental equipment and non-violent behaviour is the result not of inborn but of acquired traits.[65] We believe that results obtained by a similar enquiry regarding satyagrahis in India will not alter Case's conclusion with respect to the psycho-physical normality of non-violent resisters.

It has also been suggested that non-violence may succeed against a mild enemy like the English who recognize that the game of insurrection and repression has rules and who have streaks of humanity and liberalism. But it would have little chance of success against the pitiless might, the systematic and remorseless terror, the brutality and ferocity of totalitarian dictators.[66]

The tremendous improvement of social techniques, particularly the military technique and the technique of propaganda, has no doubt immensely increased the power of the control group running the government to secure the general acquiescence of the masses. But as Bertrand Russell points out, it is still a doubtful question as to how far, and for how long, State propaganda can prevail against the self-interest of the majority.[67] In recent times it has proved powerless against national feeling; it has also difficulty in prevailing against strong religious feeling.[67] The only sure method of suppressing opposition is the extermination, by the government, of all the people opposing it. But efforts at ruthless and total suppression are unlikely to succeed because persecution emphasizes the significance of the cause of the oppressed. Further, no government can subsist for a long time merely on the basis of force. To live it must secure the consent of the people, either in the

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65 C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, Chapters X & XI.

66 S. Radhakrishnan (ed.) *Mahatma Gandhi*, Essays by Romain Rolland, Edward Thompson and Arnold Zweig; Kenneth Ingram, *The Defeat of War*, p. 73.

67 Bertrand Russell, *Power*, p. 102.

form of active participation of the people in the political life of the State or in the form of passive acquiescence born of a conviction that the government aims at the good of the governed. Thus to secure consent it has to be humanitarian which makes total extermination of the dissentient group impossible. Besides, the *technique of coercion* calls forth a counter *technique of freedom.*[68] This is why "Power is not strongest when it uses violence, but weakest."[69]

Gandhiji does not believe in the omnipotence or permanence of arbitrary authority. According to him satyagraha is self-sufficient and does not depend for its success on the mildness of the adversary. In Chapter VII we have dealt with Gandhiji's views on the moral and psychological working of satyagraha in conflicts.[70] The various movements of non-violent resistance led by Gandhiji in South Africa and India bear ample testimony to the unique capacity of satyagraha for winning adherents, building up morale and invoking sacrifice, arousing public opinion and weakening the adversary.[71] Gandhiji believes that the reaction of satyagraha is subject to the law of progression or the law of growth which applies to every righteous struggle but is an axiom in the case of satyagraha. "This (progress) is really inevitable and is bound up with the first principles of satyagraha. For in satyagraha the

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68 E. A. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 387; Charles E. Merriam gives a brief account of the forms, violent and non-violent, which the technique of freedom usually assumes in *Political Power*, Ch. VI.

69 *Political Power*, cited above, pp. 179-80.

70 See above, pp. 158-61.

71 Niebuhr gives an important reason for the weakening of the adversary in non-violent resistance. According to him the most important of all the imponderables in a social struggle is the moral conceit by which an entrenched and dominant group identifies its interests with the peace and order of society and which gives to the group the clearest and the least justified advantage over those who are attacking the *status quo*. "The latter are placed in the category of enemies of public order, of criminals and inciters to violence and the neutral community is invariably arrayed against them." One great advantage of the temper and the method of non-violence in social conflict is that they destroy the plausibility of the moral conceit of the entrenched interests. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 250. For Brailsford's estimate of the effect of non-violent resistance of Gandhiji on the public opinion in Britain and U.S.A., see *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 184.

minimum is also the maximum, and as it is the irreducible minimum, there is no question of retreat, and the only movement possible is an advance."[72]

In one of his speeches in 1919 he remarked, "My experience of satyagraha leads me to believe that it is such a potent force that, once set in motion, it spreads till at last it becomes a dominant force in the community in which it is brought into play, and if it so spreads no Government can neglect it."[73]

To suggest that satyagraha might avail against a mild adversary like the English but is bound to fail against the brutalized hordes of modern dictators is to betray ignorance of the basic principles of satyagraha. Satyagraha would not be worth much if its effectiveness were confined to the mild and the just and if it broke down against the tyrant. Being soul-force, "superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of *ahimsa*. . . ."[74] According to Gandhiji, "Even a heart of flint will melt in front of a fire kindled by the power of soul. Even a Nero becomes a lamb when he faces love."[75] The reason is that man is greater than his deeds and, even when most depraved, he has, due to the spiritual element in him, limitless capacity for reform and regeneration. Suffering is the unfailing instrument of the satyagrahi to evoke the best in the opponent. In inflicting suffering on the satyagrahi the opponent helps in his own defeat. Thus the satyagrahi thrives on repression and no amount of violence can crush him. So "*Ahimsa* is the most efficacious in face of the greatest *himsa*."[76] "Non-violence in its positive aspect as benevolence . . . is the greatest force because of the limitless scope it affords for self-suffering."[77] In the duel between violence and non-violence, Gandhiji holds, the latter must always come out victorious in the end. There is no such thing as defeat or failure in satyagraha because in non-violence to suffer is to win. The struggle may seem to be a slow, long drawn process, but it is the swiftest, for it is the surest. There may be apparent defeats for the satyagrahi. But these are only

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72 *South Africa*, pp. 319-20.
73 *Speeches*, pp. 449-50.
74 *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 403.
75 *Speeches*, p. 393.
76 *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 138.
77 *H.*, July 26, 1942, p. 248.

temporary set-backs from which he extracts valuable lessons to guide him to the goal.

In the past some British statesmen directly or by implication bore witness to the power of satyagraha. In South Africa and India on various occasions they had to yield to the demands of satyagrahis. In an interview with Drew Pearson the then Governor of Bombay, Sir George Lloyd (later Lord Lloyd), called Gandhiji's movement of 1919-21 the most colossal experiment in world history which came within an ace of success. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact and India's freedom are also tributes to the power of satyagraha. There is hardly any justification, however, for ascribing the success or the partial success of satyagraha to the mildness or the justice of the British. According to Gandhiji the Fascists and Nazis were revised editions of democrats and had reduced to a science the unscientific violence which the latter had developed for exploiting the so-called backward races. The difference between the Fascists and the democrats of the West was one of degree. "It is, therefore, a matter of rule of three to find out the exact amount of non-violence required to melt the harder hearts of the Fascists and the Nazis if it is assumed that the so-called democracies melt before a given amount of non-violence."[78]

Satyagraha depends for its success not on the mildness of the adversary but on the capacity of the satyagrahi to suffer until the opponent relents. Satyagraha being voluntary suffering borne in love calls forth from all concerned, friends, foes and neutrals, spontaneous sympathetic response. Thus it is "a process of educating public opinion such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible."[79]

For about three decades, critics also say, satyagraha was tried in India under Gandhiji's leadership. He achieved the liberation of India but not its political unity. He was able to carry out only a very small part of his social ideal. Besides, the severe repression of the British suppressed the non-violent resistance of Indians in 1922, 1933 and 1942. Thus satyagraha is, according to these critics, a thing of history, a mere relic of a by-gone age, which cannot work successfully in the complex conditions of the modern world.

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[78] *H.*, April 15, 1939, p. 89.
[79] *H.*, March 31, 1946, p. 64.

But the country started with great initial handicaps—appalling poverty, widespread illiteracy, political indifference and above all moral degeneration born of age-long political slavery. Those with vested interests, the princes, landlords and capitalists always aligned themselves with the rulers. There was ample scope for creating dissension among the people and the British exploited it with consummate skill.

Besides, India was the first country to try non-violent resistance on a nation-wide scale. The Congress accepted non-violence as a matter of expediency rather than of principle. It was the non-violence of helplessness and not of resourcefulness, of the weak and not of the brave. Gandhiji believed that he was partly to blame for this, because for long he did not place unadulterated non-violence, i.e., non-violence of the brave, before the country.[80] But no alternative was open to him. Had he insisted on satyagrahis accepting non-violence in all its implications from the very beginning, he might have ended with himself. He presented to the Congress non-violence as an expedient and hoped that the Congress would after some experience adopt it in a more comprehensive sense. In actual practice the satyagrahis harboured ill-will against the adversary and were only outwardly non-violent. During Gandhiji's absence in prison, there was more emphasis on quantity than on quality. Even secret methods which are demoralizing and which Gandhiji always discountenanced were adopted in quest of quick results. Thus the great weakness of the satyagraha movement was that it was based on the mere physical observance of the non-violence of the weak.

The non-violence of satyagrahis was no doubt far below the required standard but in action the movement was predominantly non-violent and the satyagrahis exercised self-restraint. Never before in such large mass movements had there been so little of violence.

Besides liberating India, non-violence has exerted tremendous influence on the people. "It (satyagraha) has brought about," Gandhiji observes, "an awakening among the masses which would probably have taken generations otherwise. . . ."[81] It has removed to a large extent the moral and psychological

[80] *H.*, June 17, 1939, p. 167.
[81] *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 132.

effects of centuries of political subjection and has given to the people a consciousness of their strength to defy physical might and of their capacity for concerted action. The people have regained self-confidence and self-reliance and developed a sense of solidarity. They have come to believe that the redress of their grievances depends on their own moral strength born of sacrifices. Satyagraha has also destroyed their traditional 'political passivity', drawing them into national politics. One indication of the widespread political consciousness was the rapidly increasing response of the people to Gandhiji's call for sacrifice.[82] Another tribute to the morale of the people as well as the method of non-violence is the rapid recovery of the Congress after the repression of 1932-34 and 1942-44.

The political awakening brought about by satyagraha has quickened the pace of national life in other spheres also. Thus women have been largely emancipated and bear their due share in the national life. Untouchability seems to be on its last legs and caste restrictions have lost some of their rigidity. Cottage industries are being revived and the village is being reconstructed to assume its rightful place as the nerve centre of national life.

As regards the effect of satyagraha on the British Government, we have referred above to the tributes paid by the British statesmen to the efficacy of non-violent resistance. This resistance greatly shook the most powerful empire in the world. It shattered their prestige and was a severe blow to the morale of the police and other services. The police and the military occasionally grew sick of having to be brutal to the resisters who received but returned no violence. There were cases of open and veiled sympathy[83] and in the North-West Frontier Province, some Garhwali soldiers disobeyed the order to open fire on a

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[82] According to Dr. P. Sitaramayya 30,000 persons courted imprisonment in 1920-22 and 90,000 in 1930-31 (*History of the Congress*). By the beginning of 1933, according to Miss Wilkinson, 4,90,000 persons had gone through the prisons. Miss Wilkinson came to India in 1932, with the India League Delegation, to enquire into the political conditions then prevailing. She gave this figure in an article published in the *Manchester Guardian* and *Swarajya* in January 1932. The article is reproduced in *Indian Struggle for Freedom* (Through Western Eyes) edited by Dr. B. Kumarappa.

[83] For some instances see Rajendraprasad, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, Ch. XVII.

non-violent crowd and were court-martialled and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The British trade with India was hit hard by the economic boycott during 1930-34.[84] Satyagraha thus brought tremendous pressure to bear on the British.

Further non-violence raised Indian politics to the level of high idealism and saved Indian nationalism from exclusiveness and opportunism. Thus the non-violent movements exalted India's dignity and raised her status in her own eyes as well as in those of the world. But being based on the non-violence of the weak the Congress failed, after freedom was achieved, to mould the life of the country according to the principles of non-violence.

Some of the anarchists (e.g., Bakunin, Kropotkin and Russian Nihilists), revolutionary syndicalists and Marxists reject non-violence as an inadequate technique of resistance and consider violence as the indispensable means of transforming the present social order and ridding it of war, capitalism and exploitation.[85] Marx was against anarcho-syndicalist belief in individual acts of terror and "the propaganda of the deed". Individual forms of violence, according to Marxists, invariably

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[84] India's import of cotton goods decreased from 71.9 crores in 1927-28 to 26.1 crores in 1931-32 and 21.3 crores in 1933-34. Britain's share in the import of piecegoods fell from 78.2 per cent in 1927-28 to 53.5 per cent in 1933-34. The fall in the British share in the import of piecegoods was also due to the Japanese efficiency. (*The Indian Year Book* from 1927-28 to 1935-36).

[85] In his Amsterdam speech (Sept. 8, 1872) Marx conceded the possibility that in countries like England workers might be able to attain their end peacefully, though in continental countries force was indispensable for the attainment of the dominion of labour. In 1881, however, he said to Hyndman. "England is the one country in which a peaceful revolution is possible, but," he added after a pause, "history does not tell us so." Force is indispensable because it is the only means to dispossess the bourgeoisie, which throttles the progress of society, of the instruments of social production. The State, which is the governmental arm of the nation's industry, is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The source of power of the State lies in an armed force which is not identical with or a part of the working population but is separate from it. The liberation of the oppressed class is impossible without the destruction of the machinery of State power. Boris Nicolaivsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter* (tr. by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher), pp. 363-64 & 380; Sydney Hook, *Karl Marx*, Ch. VIII, see also his article on "Violence" in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*, Ch. I.

facilitate the policy of governmental repression and thus play into the hands of reaction. As against militarist, nationalist and New Darwinian social philosophers who perceive a continuing need for violent struggle, Marx and Lenin regarded violence as a temporary expedient, only justified as a necessary means of ushering in a new order of peace.[86] According to both Marx and Lenin violence can succeed only when the revolutionary situation, i.e., the social condition ripe for a new order, is present. In the words of Lenin, "Revolution is impossible without an all-national crisis, affecting both the exploited and the exploiters."[87]

But there is an inherent contradiction between the communist goal and the violent means. Attitudes which are inherent in the present social order must be changed if the aim is to bring about the classless and Stateless democracy, the ideal of the communist as well as of Gandhiji. Violence used on a large scale will effectually hinder the emergence of impulses and ideals demanded by the communist society. In the words of Laski, "the condition of Communism is the restraint of exactly those appetites which violence releases. . . ."[88]

Violence, like capitalism, implies treating men as mere means. It degrades and brutalizes those who use it and those against whom it is used, arousing in them hatred, fear and anger. Non-violence, on the other hand, exalts the satyagrahi as well as the opponent, thus liberating tremendous moral energy for social regeneration.[89]

In believing that an unbridgeable gulf and absolute antagonism between classes are essential features of society and that capitalists are incorrigible and past all reform, communists proceed on very wrong lines. Absolute clash of interests is an impossibility and in any case it is not a normal situation of social life: classes which may be irreconcilable in one social situation co-operate in another.[90] Every man has limitless

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86 Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, II, pp. 12-16.

87 Quoted in *Karl Marx*, cited above, p. 233. See also Sydney Hook's article on "Violence" cited above.

88 H. J. Laski, *Communism*, p. 174; *H.*, Jan. 27, 1940, p. 428.

89 Bart de Ligt, cited above, p. 165.

90 K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 342; E. Barker, *Reflections on Government*, pp. 116-20.

capacity for growth and history furnishes us with numerous instances of people who have been cured of their anti-social tendencies and have become useful members of society.

Violence is also undemocratic. It denies the basic principle of democracy, i.e., the infinite moral worth of the least among men. Violence leads to the growth of the power of experts, centralized absolute government, secret police, inquisition, militarism and denial of liberty and equality. Undemocratic power corrupts its operators, destroying their habit of responsibility, engendering in them a desire to retain power by even the foulest means and thus rendering them incapable of voluntary abdication. Besides, once a dictatorship is established, the hope of removing it under present conditions of social techniques is very remote.[91] These defects will perpetuate violence and exploitation and will have ultimately to be combated by the communists also as believers in non-violence seek to do today.

With reference to India Gandhiji often said that "Warfare may give another rule for the English rule but not self-rule in terms of the masses."[92] "The *swaraj* of my conception will come only when all of us are firmly persuaded that our *swaraj* has got to be won, worked and maintained through truth and *ahimsa* alone. True democracy or the *swaraj* of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*."[93] "From violence done to the foreign ruler, violence to our own people whom we may consider to be obstructing the country's progress is an easy natural step."[94] "Moreover, violence may destroy one or more bad rulers, but . . . others will pop up in their places, for, the root lies elsewhere. It lies in us. If we reform ourselves, the rulers will automatically do so."[95]

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[91] K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 342; *Communism*, cited above, pp. 174-76; *A Study of War*, I, cited above, p. 192. See also the discussion of War in Ch. XI below; Sydney Hook, article on "Violence", cited above.

[92] *Y. I.*, II, p. 928.

[93] *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

[94] *Y. I.*, Jan. 2, 1930, p. 4.

[95] *H.*, Sept. 21, 1934, p. 250.

Thus violence cannot introduce any fundamental change in the unjust relation between the exploiter and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled. This is why, according to Bart de Ligt, the greater the violence, the weaker the revolution, i.e., the social construction which aims at rooting out all that is inhuman and unworthy of man.[96]

Besides, in a non-violent revolution there is scope for every individual's contribution; even children can play their part. In the words of Gandhiji, "the weakest can partake in it (non-violence) without becoming weaker. They can only be the stronger for having been in it."[97] This is impossible in a violent revolution.

Unlike non-violence, violence fails to resolve conflicts; for it suppresses differences instead of integrating them. It ignores even the just claims of the opponent and thus results in injustice and leads to counter-violence. Non-violence, on the other hand, reduces resentment to a minimum in social disputes, because it leads to an effort to discriminate between the evils of a social system and the individuals who are involved in it.[98] As against violence which destroys the process of a moral and rational adjustment of interest to interest during the course of resistance, non-violence reduces this danger to a minimum and preserves moral, rational and co-operative attitudes within the areas of conflict.[99] Because violence provokes vindictiveness, while non-violence neutralizes it, there is far greater loss of life and property in a violent than in a non-violent revolution.

Non-violence has checks that automatically work for the vindication of truth and justice on whichever side these may be in a preponderating measure. Victory thus inevitably goes to the party in the right.[99]

On the other hand, in a violent conflict victory is not determined by the relative justness of the cause of the combatants but by the relative destructive strength of the two.[100] The war

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96 *The Conquest of Violence*, cited above, pp. 75, 162.

In his *Sociology of Revolution*, P. Sorokin discusses in detail the baneful effects of violent revolutions.

97 *Y. I.*, II, p. 928. See also *Y. I.*, April 2, 1931, p. 55.

98 Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp. 248-51, 254-55.

99 *Y. I.*, I, p. 52.

100 Bart de Ligt, cited above, p. 81; and *A Study of War*, I, cited above, p. 192.

machine which is more thorough in its destructiveness today than ever before is the monopoly of the State which is mostly controlled by capitalists. Violence, as the World War II shows, is ceasing to be an effective means of resistance even for a State unless its armed forces happen to be, at least, as strong as those of the adversary. Obviously the proletariat has little chance of success in a violent revolution even in an armed country, nothing to speak of a disarmed country like India.[101] Indeed, the proletariat would not be permitted to carry on the organization preparatory to violent revolution, but would be ruthlessly suppressed in the very beginning. In non-violence there is no such risk.

A violent revolution can be successful only if the Government is disorganized as it was in Russia at the time of the communist revolution. This is a very rare occurrence. Satyagraha, on the other hand, depends for its success not on external conditions, but on the capacity of resisters to suffer in love and without ill-will. It can succeed even against the mightiest of Governments.

Thus as a method of settling conflicts and regulating individual and group relations non-violence is not only the correct ideal practicable on psychological and historical evidence, it is also the highest expediency.

The World War II is a timely warning that violence is the surest way to another dark age of savagery. The sceptical world perhaps also needs some compelling demonstration of the efficiency of non-violence. Due to her long unbroken tradition of *ahimsa* dating back to the mysterious pre-historic past Gandhiji hoped that India might deliver to mankind the message of corporate non-violence. If free India accepts satyagraha as the way of life, subject nations, exploited classes and oppressed minorities may adopt the method of non-violence. This may transform the present social, political and economic structure and usher in a new order of peace and liberty.

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[101] Cf. "...the techniques of revolution lag far behind the techniques of Government. Barricades, the symbols of revolution, are relics of an age when they were built up against cavalry." K. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, p. 10.

CHAPTER XI

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NON-VIOLENT STATE[1]

The need of visualizing and defining in detail the political, economic and social institutions of the non-violent State had been the subject of a controversy in India. Gandhiji refused to worry himself about the details of the distant goal. He said with Cardinal Newman:

> "..............I do not ask to see
> The distant scene: one step enough for me."

His critics on the other hand pointed out that the leader must see not only one but thousands of steps ahead in order to avoid dangerous pitfalls and serious set-backs. He must plan not only for the present but also for the future.[2] A clear well-defined goal brings hope to the masses, inspiring them to struggle, and sustaining them in their dreary onward march.

Why this deliberate self-denying ordinance, this intellectual "non-possession", on the part of Gandhiji?

A seeker after truth must have faith in a good deed producing a good result. He must live and act in the present dealing with problems as they arise, concentrating on the immediate duties without any attachment to the fruit thereof. If he gives rein to his imagination and dissipates his energy in an attempt to describe the social order that will emerge after the non-violent revolution, he encumbers himself with irrelevant details and loses his detachment, his thought control and his present efficiency. So with his country under alien bondage Gandhiji had been devoting his entire attention to perfecting the revolutionary technique of non-violence that would transform the present system. When India became free he gave all his time and energy to the establishment of communal peace the

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1 By a non-violent State we mean the State that is predominantly non-violent. A State depending as it does more or less on coercion is the negation of non-violence. The completely non-violent State would no longer be a State. It would then be the Stateless society and society can be Stateless when it is completely or almost completely non-violent. This is an ideal that may not be fully realized. What we may get in actual practice may be a predominantly non-violent State advancing towards, though perhaps never reaching, the Stateless stage.

2 Dr. Bhagwandas: *The Philosophy of Non-co-operation*, p. 70.

absence of which, he felt sure, would destroy her freedom and democracy. Diverting his attention from these objectives was, he felt, a distraction that would hamper the creative moral effort necessary for progress towards the goal. This is why, according to Gandhiji, "The very nature of the science of satyagraha precludes the student from seeing more than the step immediately in front of him."[3]

Besides, satyagraha was a science in the making. Gandhiji had not worked it out in its entirety. He was still experimenting with non-violence, trying to apply it to all spheres of life and studying its possibilities. Indeed, he felt that the experiment was not even in its advanced stage.[4] No doubt the structure of the non-violent State would be in accordance with the principles of satyagraha. But the details would be determined by the people according to their moral level and their preferences. Gandhiji, therefore, felt that to try to determine in detail the institutional form of the future non-violent State was premature and unscientific. Thus he once wrote, "I have purposely refrained from dealing with the nature of Government in a society based on non-violence. . .when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the Government based wholly on non-violence will be like."[5]

This well-known "one-step-enough-for-me" principle of Gandhiji has also to be understood in the context of his views on the relation between the means and the end.[6] If the means are tainted with violence, physical or non-physical, the resulting State will be neither non-violent nor democratic, for the strong will seize power and exploit the weak. The way to non-violent democracy lies through the adoption of non-violence as the creed and not a mere policy. This is why to Gandhiji the problem of the technique of non-violence included in itself the problem of the institutional form of

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[3] His statement dated Patna, April 7, 1934, *History of the Congress*, p. 955.

[4] *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 136; Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8; and April 13, 1940, p. 90.

[5] *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8.

[6] For Gandhiji's views on the means and the end see chapter III above.

swaraj. "For me," he repeatedly said, "*ahimsa* comes before *swaraj*."

In the evolution of the non-violent State the determinant is not the visualization of the institutional structure but the soul-force, i.e., the non-violence, of the average individual. A people has a Government that it deserves and the institutional form is but the concrete expression of the moral level of the people. Thus if the people are not genuinely non-violent, exploitation and violence may continue, as they do in most Western countries, even under an apparently democratic constitution. On the other hand, as soon as people acquire self-control, master the method of satyagraha and learn to co-operate voluntarily among themselves and to non-co-operate with the exploiter, the non-violent State will emerge spontaneously as the by-product of the practice of non-violence.[7] In 1929 he wrote, ". . . we do not know our distant goal. It will be determined not by our definitions but by our acts, voluntary and involuntary. If we are wise, we will take care of the present and the future will take care of itself. God has given us only a limited sphere of action and a limited vision. Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof."[8]

Thus Gandhiji's attitude is democratic, scientific and justified on ethical considerations.

But though a detailed delineation of the new order was, according to him, out of question, even non-co-operation with the opponent proceeded on the basis of construction and co-operation among the satyagrahis. In satyagraha the construction of the new and the destruction of the out-moded proceed apace. The progress made by this constructive aspect of non-violent direct action gives us some clue to the new order. Besides, though against the formulation of any systematic plan of the future social order, Gandhiji often tried to indicate roughly the broad lines of the kind of society he aimed at. *Hind Swaraj* and a large number of passages in his speeches, writings, statements and interviews provide us with material for the study of his views on the new social order. Referring to *Hind Swaraj* he

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7 "It is *swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves.... But such *swaraj* has to be experienced by each one for himself." *Hind Swaraj*, p. 95.

8 *Y. I.*, III, p. 547.

observed in 1924, "...what is written there has reference to an ideal state."[9]

Gandhiji, as is well known, is a philosophical anarchist who, ideally speaking, repudiates the State as such, whatever its form. This repudiation has an ethical, historical as well as an economic basis. The compulsive nature of State authority damages the moral value of the individual's action; for an action is moral only when it is voluntary. "No action which is not voluntary can be called moral....So long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously, and as a matter of duty."[10] Besides, the State, even though its machinery be most democratic, is rooted in violence. Violence implies exploitation and every State exploits the poor. "The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soul-less machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."[11] Once while discussing his theory of trusteeship in relation to private property he remarked, "I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. We know of so many cases where men have adopted trusteeship, but none where the State has really lived for the poor."[11]

The ideal society is, according to Gandhiji, the Stateless democracy, the state of enlightened anarchy where social life has become so perfect as to be self-regulated. "In such a state (of enlightened anarchy) every one is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State."[12]

The ideal democracy will be a federation of more or less self-sufficing and self-governing satyagrahi village communities. "Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups

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[9] *Y.I.*, April 13, 1924, p. 113.

[10] *Ethical Religion*, p. 40. Cf. Bakunin.

[11] N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, pp. 202-04. Every anarchist thinker emphasizes the violent character of the State.

[12] *Y.I.*, July 2, 1931, p. 162.

settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence."[13] The federation like the groups will obviously be organized on a voluntary basis. In such a community almost every individual will have developed a high level of non-violence and acquired almost complete self-control. The individual, continuously aware of Spiritual Reality, will live a life of simplicity and renunciation and live for social service.

Referring to the democratic satyagrahi rural communities he writes, "...every village will be a republic or *panchayat* having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual which is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

"In this structure composed of innumerable villages...life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals....The outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it."[14]

So far as possible every activity of these communities will be conducted on co-operative basis. Such a village will be a perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. "The individual is the architect of his own Government. The law of non-violence rules him and his Government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour."[15]

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[13] *H.*, Jan. 13, 1940, p. 411.
[14] *H.*, July 28, 1946, p. 236.
[15] *H.*, July 26, 1942, p. 238.

It will be a decentralized society with equality pervading every sphere of life. The need for decentralization arises from the fact that centralization means concentration of power in the hands of a few people with the likelihood of its abuse. Centralization adds to the complexity of life which is a distraction in all creative moral endeavour. It damages initiative, resourcefulness, courage and creativeness and diminishes opportunities of self-government and of resisting injustice. It leads to depersonalization and insensibility to moral considerations. So the more of centralization, the less of democracy. "Centralization as a system," wrote Gandhiji in 1941, "is inconsistent with the non-violent structure of society." "I suggest," he remarked in 1939, "that if India is to evolve along non-violent lines it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force."[16]

Gandhiji's views on non-violent values give concreteness to his ideas about decentralization and how it will be related to centralization which is implicit in a federation. The ideal society being based on non-violence, the control of the federation over the units will be purely moral and in no way coercive. He lays stress on non-possession, bread-labour and *swadeshi*. The first two imply voluntary poverty, village industries and the common people owning the means of production and having the capacity to resist injustice. *Swadeshi* which demands attention to duties immediate in point of space and time as against remote ones relates the area of a man's direct service to his capacity for knowing, loving and serving. He insists that the satyagrahi must maintain personal contact with the people of his locality. This living association of human beings is essential to a genuine democracy. But such an association requires that the locality must be small enough for active participation in common affairs to be within the reach of human beings. Thus his emphasis is on small as against big groups.

Equality in the social sphere will be expressed through the law of *varna* combined with the ideals of non-possession and bread-labour. According to Gandhiji the law of *varna* "established certain spheres of action for certain people with certain

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[16] *H.*, Jan. 18, 1942, p. 5; Dec. 30, 1939, p. 391.

tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. While recognizing limitations the law of *varna* admitted of no distinctions of high and low. . . . My conviction is that an ideal social order will only be evolved when the implications of this law are fully understood and given effect to."[17] *Varna* is, according to Gandhiji, intimately, though not indissolubly, connected with birth. He also believes that individuals belonging to every *varna* must do bread-labour, i.e., physical labour enough for their daily bread. Whatever people do with their body or mind apart from bread-labour will be the labour of love for the common good for which no payment should be demanded.[18] Gandhiji's social ideal thus implies fullest freedom to every individual to devote himself to social service according to his peculiar aptitude.

The ideal of bread-labour automatically leads to non-possession and economic equality which non-violence also implies. "Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically when there is perfect love there must be perfect non-possession."[19] Thus the law of *varna* and the ideals of bread-labour and non-possession will bring about complete economic and social equality.

The ideals of non-possession and bread-labour also imply an agricultural, rural civilization based on handicrafts. There will be no room in this society for exploitation, the *zamindari* system or capitalism. Everybody would be his own master and none a hired labourer of another. We have discussed in chapter VIII the moral, physical and economic advantages of cottage industries. Gandhiji is not against machinery as such but he is against centralized mass production and profit motive. Centralized production leads to concentration of power, needs control of big markets and vast quantities of raw materials and leads to exploitation. A non-violent civilization, therefore, cannot grow up on the factory system, but "it can be built on self-contained villages."[20] Gandhiji, however, welcomes "simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual

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17 N. K. Bose, cited above, p. 205.

18 See above, pp. 90-92.

19 N. K. Bose, cited above, p. 200.

20 *H.*, Nov., 1939, p. 331.

labour and lightens the burden of millions of cottagers. . . ."[21] Machinery, however, "must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour."[22] Besides, this machinery must be such as the villages can themselves make and can afford to use.[23]

In this democratic community of self-contained villages true to the ideal of *swadeshi* there will be little international trade and very little of it between one province and another, even between one district and another.

Gandhiji believes that the ideal society is incompatible with heavy transport, courts, lawyers, the modern system of medicine and big cities.[24] He writes, "I doubt if the steel age is an advance on the flint age." "I wholeheartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction."[25] In the ideal society there will be no centralized production and, therefore, no heavy transport requiring such production. Besides, most of such transport is due to military considerations and international trade with both of which the non-violent society will have nothing to do. Similarly, serious differences among non-violent people will be few and far between and will be adjusted by mutual discussion, persuasion, sometimes by arbitration and rarely, when these methods do not suffice, by self-imposed suffering. The idea of bread-labour rules out professional doctors. There will also be no mass production of drugs, medical instruments etc. Most of the diseases that pester human life today will disappear due to the inward control acquired by the individual, the emphasis on manual labour and the absence of the senseless rush and worry born of the ever-present scare of competition and insecurity in modern life. Gandhiji holds a high opinion of the efficacy of ancient Indian *yogic* exercises for mental, moral and physical health. The minor ailments that remain will yield to various methods of nature cure. Thus the ideal democracy will be none the worse for the disappearance of doctors who by promising easy cure encourage self-indulgence instead of inculcating self-control among the people.

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21 *Y. I.*, II, p. 797.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 713.

23 *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

24 *Speeches*, p. 770.

25 *Y. I.*, III, p. 120.

But how will the non-violent democracy adjust the claims of society and the individual and reconcile individual freedom with social obligation, a task achieved at present by the State by means of coercion exercised in the last resort?

To Gandhiji society is just like a family, and the relation between the individual and society is one of close inter-dependence. He rejects alike the unrestricted individualism that ignores social obligations as well as the other extreme view which regards the individual as a mere cog in the social machine. He writes, "I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to the present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the wellbeing of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member."[26] But as between the individual and society the individual comes first in Gandhiji's philosophy, though society is by no means neglected. The individual is above all the soul and in any scheme of social progress the first step always lies with him. The evolution of the Stateless non-violent democracy depends on the average individual evolving genuine non-violence and acquiring personal *swaraj*. Society must provide opportunities for the maximum growth of the individual which consists in selfless service of society and willing fulfilment of his social obligations. In case either of the two goes wrong the other should resist non-violently. But apart from the pressure of the drastic step of non-violent direct action and the inward morality of the individual, both of which induce him to fulfil his social obligations, there is another non-violent factor which keeps the individual alive to these obligations. This is what Hindu thinkers call *dharma*.

Dharma which corresponds to the German conception of *sittlichkeit*[27] is a system of culture and discipline rather than a creed. It is neither subjective in the sense of morality imposed by the individual's conscience, nor external like the law enforced

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26 *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 144.

27 Ernest Barker translates it as 'social ethics' in *Political Thought in England from Spencer to Today*, p. 27.

by the State. *Dharma* is not a fixed code of mechanical rules, but a living spirit which grows and moves in response to the development of society.[28] The function of *dharma* is to hold together harmoniously the social order and to act as a guide to the individual's conscience so as to train him to realize his potentialities.

Dharma or social ethics of the non-violent society, which will exert strong moral pressure on the individual and thus reinforce his conscience, will be a very important factor in sustaining social cohesion. The children born and educated in the ideal non-violent atmosphere will imbibe the new morality in the natural course.

Even today the fulfilment of the individual's social obligation is due not so much to law and coercion as to other factors, specially the force of habit, the inward urge of the individual's moral sense and the pressure of social ethics. Far more than today in the village communities of ancient India social and economic life was regulated by *dharma* of which the law of *varnashrama* was an important part. In ancient India the function of the State was not to alter or amend *dharma* but to subserve it. The disciplinary function which the State performs today by means of law and coercion mostly belonged, in ancient India, to voluntary associations employing non-coercive methods, i.e., moral pressure. It was not a case of an utter lack of social restraint, but moral pressure rather than coercion was the means of this restraint. This pressure in the last resort took the form of the refusal of society to have social or economic dealings with the reprobated individual. Very likely this pressure often deteriorated into non-physical violence, but at least it could be non-violent, and in a free society Gandhiji would prefer it to the organized violence of the State.[29]

The village communities of ancient India, life in which was to a large extent spontaneously self-regulated, made a near approach to Gandhiji's ideal of enlightened anarchy. Thus he writes, "The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India. I admit that

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28 S. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart of Hindustan*, p. 18.

29 Thus Gandhiji writes, "Social boycott such as stopping barbers, washermen, etc., is undoubtedly a punishment which may be good in a free society." *Y. I.*, I, p. 941.

it was very crude. I know that there was in it no non-violence of my definition and conception. But the germ was there."[30] In his well-known address to the Missionary Conference, Madras (1916), Gandhiji said, "Following out the *swadeshi* spirit I observe the indigenous institutions and the village *panchayats* hold me. India is really a republican country, and it is because it is that, that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian born or foreigners, have hardly touched the vast masses except for collecting revenue. The latter in their turn seem to have rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's and for the rest have done much as they have liked. The vast organization of caste answered not only the religious wants of the community, but it answered to its political needs. The villages managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers."[31]

Thus in the non-violent society non-violence will reconcile individual freedom with social restraint. Non-violence implies that mechanisms of control which maintain social cohesion will consist of internal and non-coercive external sanctions.[32] The individual will use his opportunity to advance "the greatest good

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[30] *H.*, Jan. 13, 1940, p. 411.

[31] *Speeches*, p. 276.

[32] Instances of internal sanctions are fear of being shamed, sense of guilt, force of habit etc., while pressure of public opinion, fear of reciprocal action, dread of divine power are some of the external sanctions. Various agencies of education are the chief means of the internalization of the norms of a society. On the basis of anthropological evidence Mead believes that "As much specific education is necessary to train a child to respond to external as to internal sanctions." In Ch. I we have referred to the Jewish community which was held together by non-coercive sanctions. In some of the primitive tribes today there is nothing corresponding to the State. Thus the Eskimos and the Ojibwa lack political forms necessary for group action. Similarly the Arapesh and the Bachiga lack effective administrative mechanism and are not political societies. Among the Zuni and the Samoa also strong central authority with effective sanctions is lacking. None of these tribes values property highly, all of them considering it of slight importance. See Margaret Mead (ed.), *Co-operation and Competition among Primitive Tribes*, specially the last chapter.

Prof. Ross observes that political types of control which operate through fear or prejudice will be preferred in a society in proportion as the population elements to be held together are anti-pathetic and jarring; the subordination of the individual will and welfare is required by the scheme

of all", while society will give to the individual maximum opportunity. Either can resist injustice on the part of the other non-violently.

But the Stateless non-violent society in which there will be no police and military, no law courts, doctors, heavy transport and centralized production is an inspiring ideal rather than the goal to be soon realized.[33] Society can become Stateless only when men have acquired complete personal *swaraj* and grown accustomed spontaneously to observe their social obligations without the operation of the State. Because people could not yet rise to the level of this exacting idealism, in his corporate activity Gandhiji did not aim at destroying immediately hospitals and courts, railways and mills, though he considered them a necessary evil, would welcome their natural destruction and was, in his personal capacity, working for the realization of the ideal society in which these would have no place.[34]

Indeed, Gandhiji believes that the ideal society will always remain an ideal unrealized and unrealizable in its entirety. This is his attitude towards all ideals.[35] In 1931, referring to the Stateless society he said, "But the ideal is never fully realized in life."[36] In 1940 in a conversation at Santiniketan, in answer to

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of control; the social constitution stereotypes differences of status; the differences in economic conditions and opportunity it consecrates are great and cumulative; and the parasitic relation is maintained between races, classes or sexes. On the other hand ethical instruments of control, such as public opinion, suggestion, personal ideal, social religion, art and social valuation, will be preferred in proportion as the population is homogeneous; its culture is uniform and diffused; the social contacts between the elements in the population are many and amicable; the total burden of requirement laid upon the individual is light; and the social constitution does not consecrate distinctions of status or the parasitic relation, but conforms to common elementary notions of justice. E. A. Ross, *Social Control*, pp. 411-13.

33 Amongst anarchist thinkers, Godwin, Thomas Hodgskin and Proudhon did not look forward to the establishment of a society from which the State would be completely eliminated. On the other hand Bakunin, Josiah Warren, Benjamin Tucker and Kropotkin, besides many other anarchist thinkers, held that it was possible to evolve a Stateless society. Marx and Lenin also believed that the proletarian State would wither away and people would grow accustomed to observe conditions of social existence without force and without subjection.

34 *Hind Swaraj*, pp. vii & viii; *Y. I.*, I, pp. 885-86; and *Y. I.*, II, pp. 1129-30.

35 See chapter V.

36 *Y. I.*, July 2, 1931, p. 162.

the question, "Can a State carry on strictly according to the principle of non-violence?" Gandhiji replied, "A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it."[37] In 1946 he disclaimed interest in the problem and pointed out that "nowhere in the world does a State without Government exist." But he expressed the hope that if people continued to work for such a society it might slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people could benefit by it. He also held that if at all it could ever come into being it would be in India; for this was the only country where an attempt had been made. The way to work towards it was completely to shed the fear of death.[38]

The ideal non-violent society of Gandhiji, unattainable due to human imperfection, indicates the direction rather than the destination, the process rather than the consummation. The structure of the State that will emerge as a result of the non-violent revolution will be a compromise, a *via media*, between the ideal non-violent society and the facts of human nature. It will be the attainable "middle way"[39] of Gandhiji, the first step, after the revolution, towards the ideal.

This *via media* will correspond to the quality of non-violence evolved by the average individual. Non-violence and democracy are both rooted in the spiritual equality of all men. Democracy to be genuine must provide adequate opportunity to the weakest and the strongest. This cannot happen except through non-violence.[40] If political power is won through the non-violence of the weak the State established will be at best a political democracy or democracy as the machinery of government. The external form, the constitution, will be democratic but exploitation will continue, for the non-violence of the weak permits the use of violence. On the other hand if the non-violence evolved in the revolution is that of the brave, the resulting

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37 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

38 *H.*, Sept. 15, 1946, p. 309.

39 Gandhiji once said, "Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way." *Y. I.*, II, p. 659.

40 *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 129.

State will be a genuine democracy, in which exploitation and coercion will be minimized. This is why Gandhiji defines democracy as "the rule of unadulterated non-violence".[41] Thus in answer to a letter from Lord Lothian, he wrote, "...constitutional or democratic Government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy."[42]

In India's war of liberation, in spite of Gandhiji's efforts, the Congress failed to evolve the non-violence of the brave. Even now if people accept the non-violent way, the State and society will become predominantly non-violent, i.e., democratic. The State "would for the most part be based on non-violence".[43]

The State will no doubt continue to exist, for there will be some individuals or groups with anti-social tendencies and the absence of external restraint will lead to anarchy.

The satyagrahi State will be equal in status to other States and free to manage its own affairs. Progress is impossible without the right to err, i.e., freedom to try experiments, and Gandhiji defines *swaraj* as "freedom to err and the duty of correcting errors".[44] Freedom is a part of truth; unless a nation is free it cannot worship truth.[45] So every nation, nothing to speak of a satyagrahi nation, should be free to rule itself.[46] Freedom of a country is essential not only for its own progress but also for that of others. Control of one country over another is destructive of democracy in the imperialist country and leads to international complications and wars. Gandhiji, as we have pointed out later in this chapter, does not stand for isolated independence, nor is his nationalism exclusive nor designed to harm any nation or individual.

Freedom and equality will not only characterize the international statús of the satyagrahi State but also determine its internal life. The State will be democratic, for masses accepting non-violence as the way of life will control political power. Says Gandhiji, "*Swaraj* for me means freedom for the meanest of our

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[41] *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 320.
[42] *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8.
[43] *H.*, Feb. 16, 1947, p. 25.
[44] *Speeches*, p. 388.
[45] *Y. I.*, II, p. 2.
[46] *Y. I.*, Oct. 15, 1931.

countrymen."[47] India's *swaraj* signifies to him the vesting of the ultimate authority in the peasant and the labourer and not the mere transference of power from the white bureaucrat to the brown bureaucrat.[48] Non-violence or democracy also involves self-purification or the moral regeneration of the individual. In Gandhiji's words, "...political self-government, that is, self-government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-government."[49] "The root meaning of *swaraj* is self-rule. *Swaraj* may, therefore, be rendered as disciplined rule from within....The word *swaraj* is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which independence often means."[49]

To Gandhiji political power, i.e., the State, is not an end in itself but "one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life".[50] Thus he does not accept the Hegelian view of the State as the final goal of human organization, its own end and object, the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual and is itself above morality, or the Mussolinian dictum, "Outside the State there is nothing". Gandhiji does not consider the State even the group of groups or the community of communities as the idealist thinkers like Green and Bosanquet do. To him the State is only "one of the means" to secure the greatest good of all. There is nothing sacrosanct about the State. It is a concession to human weakness and the more man can do without it, the more real is his freedom. He distrusts the State and seeks to develop in the people, through satyagraha, the capacity to resist the State authority when it is abused. In fact, he expects every member of a democratic State to be "capable of defending his liberty against the whole world". According to him, "...real *swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused. In other words, *swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority."[51]

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47 *Y. I.*, II, p. 602.
48 *Speeches*, pp. 378 and 380.
49 Mahadev Desai, *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*, p. 93.
50 *Y. I.*, July 2, 31.
51 *Y. I.*, II, p. 491.

Again, "Real home-rule is possible only where passive resistance (satyagraha) is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule."[52]

Like pluralists and anarchists, Gandhiji is against the theory of absolute sovereignty of the State which lays upon the individual the duty of absolute, unquestioning obedience to the law of the State. He believes in the "Sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority".[53] A man, according to him, owes only a limited and relative loyalty to the State as to other associations. This loyalty is conditional on the decision of the State or any other association appealing to the individual's conscience. This is no doubt a perpetual threat of anarchy. But this is the only adequate safeguard against the abuse of political power. Though Gandhiji makes the disobedience of laws, which offend the moral sense, a right as well as a duty of the citizen and considers such disobedience the key to democracy,[54] he provides ample safeguard against anarchy by making this disobedience civil and non-violent.

As regards the political constitution of the non-violent State, it may be pointed out that from 1909 onwards Gandhiji subjected the Parliamentary Government as prevailing in England to severe criticism. In 1917 in his presidential address to the first Gujarat Political Conference he demanded Parliamentary Government. In 1920 he said, "My *swaraj* is the Parliamentary Government of India in the modern sense of the term for the time being. . . ."[55] In 1942 he told Louis Fischer that he did not believe in the accepted Western form of democracy with its universal voting for parliamentary representatives.[56] This seems to be confusing, but it should be borne in mind that he attaches far more importance to the spirit behind a constitution

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52 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 74.

53 H., Jan. 2, 1937, p. 374. The above is his definition of the term *Ramaraj* which he frequently used to convey to the people the content of a democratic State. *Ramaraj* is "the Kingdom of Righteousness". "By *Ramaraj* I do not mean Hindu *raj*. I mean by *Ramaraj* Divine *raj*, the Kingdom of God. . .the ancient ideal of *Ramaraj* is undoubtedly one of true democracy. . . ." *Y. I.*, May 28, 1931, p. 126; Sept. 19, 1929, p. 305.

54 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 71.

55 *Y. I.*, I, p. 873; also see *Y. I.*, I, p. 885 and the Introduction to *Hind Swaraj*, p. VIII.

56 Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, p. 55.

than to its external form. His criticism of parliamentary democracy is due more to the spirit in which it is actually worked than to the constitutional machinery. Gandhiji does not believe that representative institutions are something new or unsuitable to India, though he is against a wholesale copying of the West.[57]

States in the West are only nominal democracies because they ignore the vital requirements regarding non-violence and purificatory discipline. Hence the mad race for armaments, imperialism, exploitation, capitalism, political instability, political corruption and poverty of leadership. According to Gandhiji capitalism has, by making State intervention necessary in economic affairs, contributed to the emergence of the all-powerful State which makes individual freedom impossible and is the greatest danger the world faces. The real problem today is to devise checks and balances on such a State and to prevent its rise.[58]

In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhiji severely criticizes the Mother of Parliaments comparing it to a "sterile woman". It has not yet of its own accord done a single good thing. If Parliament consists of the best men elected by enlightened voters, it "should not need the spur of petitions or any other pressure. Its work should be so smooth that its effect should be more apparent day by day. But, as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the guiding motive."[59] Besides, Parliament is mercurial and unsteady in its fidelity to ministers. "Today it is under Mr. Asquith, tomorrow it may be under Mr. Balfour."[60] Another instance of Parliament's fickleness is that there is no certainty about its decisions. "What is done today may be undone tomorrow. It is not possible to recall a single instance in which finality can be predicted for its work."[61]

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[57] *Y. I.*, III, p. 285.

[58] Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, pp. 82-83.

[59] *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 15-16.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 16. Gandhiji's opinion seems to be that if sincere efforts were made to ascertain truth and stick to it and if the leaders had acquired personal *swaraj*, there should not be frequent swings of pendulum in public life.

The members of Parliament are seen to stretch themselves and doze when the greatest questions are debated. "Sometimes they talk away until listeners are disgusted. Carlyle called it the 'talking shop of the world'. Members vote for their party without a thought."[62]

The Prime Minister falls far short of Gandhiji's ideal of leadership. The Prime Minister is more concerned about his power than about the welfare of Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party. It is never his constant care that Parliament shall do right. Prime Ministers are known to have made Parliament do things merely for party advantage.[63] They cannot be really considered to be patriotic, and though they do not take bribes, they are open to subtler influence. "In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honours. . . they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience."[63]

The voters take their cue from their newspapers, which are often dishonest.[63] The voters are as changeable and fickle as their Parliament. Their views "swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast".[63] The people would follow a powerful orator or a man who gives them parties, receptions, etc. Due to these defects democracies in the West are undemocratic. Masses, instead of ruling themselves, are exploited by the ruling classes. Parliaments are the emblems of slavery and costly toys of nations—costly because they are a waste of time and money.

In recent years Parliamentary Government has been subjected to severe criticism. Thus the system of elections; the slow-moving procedure; the incapacity of the system, due to centralization and congestion of business, for the creative work of social and economic regeneration; the dictatorship of the cabinet; the increasing power of permanent officials; the failure of the system to induce the citizen to participate actively in political life; the absence of approximate economic equality—all these weak points have been assailed by critics. To Gandhiji democracy remains unachieved more on account of the prevailing belief in the efficacy of violence and untruth than on account

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[62] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[63] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

of mere institutional inadequacy. Democracy is vitiated by the wrong ideas and ideals that move men.

If people accept the way of non-violence, the democratic State that emerges will be inspired by the ideals of truth and non-violence. Corruption and hypocrisy that characterize modern democracies will be minimized. The emphasis will be not on mere numbers but on the spirit of equality expressing itself in service and sacrifice. In a statement issued in 1934 Gandhiji remarked, "Western democracy is on its trial. If it has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk the true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible method. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within."[64]

Gandhiji is not against elections and representation. In 1925 he wrote, "By *swaraj* I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters."[65] Again, "If independence is born non-violently all the component parts will be voluntarily inter-dependent working in perfect harmony under a representative central authority which will derive its sanction from the confidence reposed in it by the component parts." The central power, he goes on to add, will be based on "universal suffrage exercised by a disciplined and politically intelligent electorate".[66]

If he could have his way he would like the democratic State to be administered by a few representatives selected by the people and removable at the will of the people. A reduction in the number of representatives would be feasible in a predominantly non-violent State due to the extreme decentralization of

[64] *History of the Congress*, pp. 981-82.
[65] *Y. I.*, II, pp. 488-89.
[66] *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 320.

political and economic authority, the limited functions of the State and the correspondingly increased importance of voluntary associations.

At the Round Table Conference Gandhiji suggested indirect election through the village *panchayats*.[67] In 1942 he again advocated the system of indirect election. According to him seven hundred thousand villages of India will be organized according to the will of its citizens, all of them voting. These villages, each having one vote, will elect their district administrations. The district administrations will elect provincial administrations which in turn will elect a president who will be the national chief executive. This will decentralize power among seven hundred thousand units. There will then be among these villages voluntary co-operation which will produce real freedom.[68] This indirect election should not be branded as undemocratic. It will give us representatives tried and tested in the life of groups and substitute active participation for the present-day passive representation.[69] It will diminish excitement, bribery, corruption and violence in elections and it has to be understood in the context of decentralization and reduced functions of the State. At the Round Table Conference Gandhiji was also opposed to second chambers and to special representation of interests as these are undemocratic.

Those seeking election must have acquired personal *swaraj*, i.e., must be selfless, able and incorruptible. They should be free from the morbid craze for office, self-advertisement, running down of opponents, and psychological exploitation of voters which are so much in evidence in elections today. The vote should not come as a result of canvassing but by virtue of

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67 *The Nation's Voice*, p. 18.

68 Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, pp. 55 and 80. "Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The government of the village will be conducted by the *panchayat* of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this *panchayat* will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office." *H.*, July 26, 1942, p. 238.

69 *The Nation's Voice*, pp. 19-20.

service rendered by the candidate. All public offices must be held in the spirit of service without the slightest expectation of personal gain. "If A is satisfied in ordinary life with getting rupees twenty-five per month he has no right to expect rupees two hundred and fifty on becoming a minister or obtaining any other office under the Government."[70] In the case of a satyagrahi who wills the common weal and not merely his own and tries to advance it, the willingness to accept office implies love and service of mankind. In his case, to use the words of Prof. Hocking, "power over men becomes completely merged with power for men."[71]

As for voters, according to Gandhiji, "The qualifications for franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work. . .literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the government and the wellbeing of the State.'[72] Labour franchise is the application to politics of the ideal of bread-labour which aims at making life self-sufficient and people self-reliant and fearless. The intelligent and conscious adoption of the ideal of bread-labour will prevent voters from becoming mere pawns in the hands of politicians.[73] It will develop in the people the capacity to resist misuse of authority and prevent the division of the State into a small class of exploiting, self-seeking rulers and a large class of exploited subjects rendering passive, unthinking obedience.

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70 *H.*, Sept. 3, 1938, p. 292. Ideally speaking every individual should earn his living by engaging in bread-labour and should perform public duties in the spirit of service without any pay. This may be possible only in the distant future. Even under present conditions Gandhiji is against public servants getting salaries out of all proportion to the national income. Under *swaraj* Government, Gandhiji advocates, there should be drastic cuts in salaries. According to the resolution of the Karachi Congress on Fundamental Rights rupees five hundred should be the maximum salary payable to the highest State functionaries. The *London Times* once defined adequate salaries by saying that the salary should be enough not to deter any person of public spirit from taking up an office and on the other hand it should not attract people into public life for the sake of the salary. (See *Harijan*, August 7, 1937).

71 W. E. Hocking, *Man and the State*, p. 316.

72 *Y. I.*, II, pp. 435-36.

73 *H.*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 373.

As regards age limits of the voters Gandhiji was in favour of "the franchise of all adults above the age of twenty-one or even eighteen. He would bar old men like himself. They were of no use as voters. India and the rest of the world did not belong to those who were on the point of dying. To them belonged death, life to the young. Thus he would have a bar against persons beyond a certain age, say fifty, as he would against youngsters below eighteen."[74] Thus Gandhiji would reserve the right to vote only for people who are between eighteen and fifty and who contribute by body labour to the service of the State. People above fifty will have only moral influence but no political authority through the vote.

The State established by the non-violent revolution will be what has been called "a spiritualized democracy". In such a democracy the method of taking decision by majority opinion will be ordinarily, though not always, applicable. In matters concerning a particular religious or cultural group within the State the decision will rest with the group itself. In vital questions the dissent of the minority will get the fullest consideration and will not be disregarded by the majority. Says Gandhiji, "In matters of conscience the law of majority has no place."[75] "The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority."[76] "...no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgment....And the least, therefore, that we owe to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponent's view-point and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life."[77] Again, "The rule of majority does not mean it should suppress the opinion of even an individual if it is sound. An individual's opinion should have greater weight

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74 *H.*, March 2, 1947, p. 45.
75 *Y. I.*, I, p. 860.
76 *Ibid.*, pp. 864-65.
77 *Y. I.*, II, p. 227.

than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound. That is my view of real democracy."[78]

Subjection of the dissentient minority to the will of the majority in questions involving important principles is not only the negation of non-violence but will also be resisted by the satyagrahi minority. In such cases the only way for the majority as well as the minority will be to try to convert the other through persuasion or self-suffering.

Thus in the non-violent democracy there would be no place for the tyranny of the majority. The meticulous regard that Gandhiji advocates for the minority is not the tyranny of the minority but "the magnanimity of the majority".[79] On the other hand, it is the duty of the minority to yield to the majority decision except when the decision offends their moral sense; for otherwise there can be no social life and no corporate self-government.

The non-violent State will be a secular State.[80] Gandhiji did not believe in State religion even though the whole community had one religion. Every one living in the State should be entitled to profess his religion without let or hindrance, so long as the citizen obeyed the common law of the land. "If I were a dictator," he said in 1946, "religion and State would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it....That is everybody's personal concern." According to him, the State cannot concern itself or cope with religious education. Religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. He was also opposed to State aid to religious bodies. "An institution or group, which did not manage to finance its own religious teaching, was a stranger to true religion." In this context by religion he means denominationalism and not fundamental ethics common to all religions. "Teaching of fundamental ethics is a function of the State."

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78 Gandhiji's statement on the break-down of Gandhi-Jinnah talks. Sept. 28, 1944.

79 *H.*, July 1, 1939, p. 185.

80 References to Gandhiji's views on this topic are:

H., Sept. 22, 1946, p. 321; March 16, 1947, p. 63; March 23, 1947, p. 76; Aug. 24, 1947, p. 292; Aug. 31, 1947, pp. 297 and 303.

The non-violent democracy is the highest form of State that man has yet been able to envisage. No doubt such a State will make great demands on the individual, for it presumes man not as he lives but as he should, not for the pleasures of the senses but for the service of society. The non-violent State can subsist only on the basis of a strong sense of unity of ideals. But non-violent direct action that will usher in the non-violent State will also create that moral atmosphere in which alone this State can flourish.

The State is a mere means and not an end. The ultimate end or purpose of the non-violent State will be to advance "the greatest good of all". To that end it will give to the individual maximum opportunity for growth. But the State is rooted in violence, exploits the poor and by enforcing action restricts the scope for self-rule on the part of the individual. So in a predominantly non-violent society the State will govern the least and use the least amount of force.[81] Consistently with the moral level of the people it will aim at reducing its functions so as to efface itself ultimately and thus lead to the self-regulated, ordered anarchy.

As regards the State governing the least Gandhiji writes, "our capacity for *swaraj* depends upon our capacity for solving without reference to, or intervention of, the Government, all the varied and complex problems that must arise in the affairs of one of the biggest and the most ancient nations like ours."[82] "Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of Government control, whether it is foreign or whether it is national. *Swaraj* Government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life."[83] Again, "I admit that there are certain things which cannot be done without political power, but there are numerous other things which do not at all depend upon political power. That is why a thinker like Thoreau said that 'that Government is best which governs the least.' This means that when people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much State interference

81 *Y. I.*, III, p. 560.
82 *Y. I.*, I, p. 742.
83 *Y. I.*, II, p. 290.

is truly democratic. Where such condition is absent the form of Government is democratic in name."[84]

If freedom is based on the non-violence of the brave "least government" will be practicable, for that freedom will be an organic inward growth. People will acquire capacity for voluntary co-operation and concerted action and will learn to regulate most of their social life through voluntary organizations. Thus the village units will be self-sufficient in regard to production and defence. "A village unit," said Gandhiji in 1946, "conceived by me is as strong as the strongest."[85] The bewildering multiplicity of functions which the modern State performs will also become unnecessary in the non-violent State due to the simplicity of life, decentralization and the absence of violent class conflict and militarism. Besides, the justification and the extent of State activity depends on whether people attach greater value to security against the invasive acts of others, i.e., to peace and order imposed by law, than to freedom of action. In the non-violent State such invasive acts will be infrequent and people will have acquired the technique of dealing with them non-violently. This will also narrow the province of State action.

The functions of the State will be gradually reduced and transferred to voluntary associations. Gandhiji is, however, not a doctrinaire. He would decide every case on its own merits and where State action is likely to advance the welfare of the people he would welcome it in spite of his distrust of the State. In performing its functions the object of the State will be to serve the masses. The interest of the classes, so long as these continue, will be its concern to the extent that this interest subserves and does not conflict with the interest of the masses. Gandhiji insists that every interest that is hostile to that of the masses must be revised or must subside if it is incapable of revision.[86]

The State will perform its functions with the minimum use of coercion. Towards the close of this chapter we have dealt with the non-violent way in which this State will meet foreign aggression. Internally the need of coercion arises in relation to crimes and other violent outbreaks both of which threaten the existence of society.

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[84] *H.*, Jan. 11, 1936, p. 380.
[85] *H.*, Aug. 4, 1946, p. 252.
[86] *Y. I.*, Sept. 17, 1931.

As stated earlier, according to Gandhiji all crime is a disease caused by social failings.[87] That is why in the non-violent State, though there may be crimes, nobody will be regarded or treated as a criminal.[88] The non-violence of the brave will bring about the rationalization of social, political and economic institutions, which will be based on justice, real equality and genuine brotherhood.[89] The Government will rule "through its moral authority based upon the greatest goodwill of the people."[90] The pressure of social ethics will induce far more spontaneous conformity to the demands of social obligations than it does today. The satyagrahi citizen will deal with crimes non-violently.[91] So in the non-violent State crime as well as coercion will diminish.

Crime will, however, not disappear, for the non-violent State will not consist of ideal men. There will remain some anti-social, parasitic individuals, victims of social maladies, who might, due to lack of self-control, resort to violence and disobey laws. Thus referring to criminal distillation Gandhiji once wrote, "Some of it will go on perhaps till doomsday as thieving will."[92] When the new State enters upon its career there may be some violent organizations seeking to subvert the non-violent Government. According to Gandhiji, "No Government can allow private military organizations to function without endangering public peace."[93] Nor will the satyagrahi State tolerate crimes and allow civil liberty to degenerate into criminal liberty, i.e., licence. Thus it will not ignore incitement to violence.[94] Crimes cannot be ignored for they promote an atmosphere of violence and are

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87 See pp. 154-55, *supra.*

88 *H.*, May 5, 1946, p. 124.

89 *H.*, April 27, 1940, p. 108.

90 *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 197.

91 See pp. 156-61, *supra.*

92 *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 86.

93 *H.*, April 13, 1940, p. 86.

"The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a constituent assembly." *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 96. Gandhiji's article entitled "Jai Prakash's Picture" giving in outline Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's views about the structure of the Indian State after the success of the non-violent revolution. Gandhiji concurred with the socialist leader's views.

94 *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308.

destructive of ordered society and "No Government worth its name can suffer anarchy to prevail."[95]

Personally Gandhiji does not believe in "imprisoning by way of punishment even those who commit violence."[96] Indeed he does not believe in the system of punishment for crimes, whether private or public.[97] If he had his way he would fling open doors of prisons and discharge even murderers.[98] But that is an unrealizable ideal under present conditions of society. Thus he wrote in 1937, "I have personally not found a way out of punishment and punitive restrictions in all conceivable cases." But though he would retain punishment, "punishments have to be non-violent if such an expression is permissible in that connection."[99]

In dealing with crime the satyagrahi State will make the minimum use of coercion. The object of the State will be neither retribution nor deterrence both of which, as large-scale recidivism bears out, tend to deaden the criminal's sociability and injure society as well as the criminal. The satyagrahi State will aim at the reform of the offender. The non-violent treatment will put an end to intimidation and humiliation, and occasional torture and terror to which the offender is at present subjected. Obviously there will be no place for capital punishment as death sentence is contrary to *ahimsa*. "Under a State governed according to principles of *ahimsa*, therefore, a murderer would be sent to a penitentiary and there given a chance of reforming himself."[100] Between capital punishment and other punishments there is, to Gandhiji, a difference not merely of quantity but also of quality. Other punishments can be recalled and reparations can be made to the person wrongly punished. "But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation."[101]

Gandhiji was, however, not against persons being "merely detained so as to be unable to do harm, whether moral, social or political in accordance with the conception of respective

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95 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

96 His statement on the morning of the Gandhi-Irwin Truce in 1931. *History of the Congress*, p. 753.

97 *H.*, Sept. 4, 1937, p. 233.

98 D. G. Tendulkar and others, *Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, p. 381.

99 *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308.

100 *H.*, April 27, 1940, p. 101.

101 *Y. I.*, II, p. 862.

States."[102] But though he would retain jails, he would make them as non-violent as possible.

In 1937, when the Congress assumed office in the provinces, Gandhiji suggested that jails should be turned into reformatories and workshops and should be self-supporting and educational instead of being spending and punitive departments. For the reform of jails Gandhiji had prepared a plan in 1922 when he was a prisoner. The plan was that "all industries that were not paying should be stopped. All the jails should be turned into hand-spinning and hand-weaving institutions. They should include (wherever possible) cotton-growing to producing the finest cloth. . . .Prisoners must be treated as defectives, not criminals to be looked down upon. Warders should cease to be the terrors of the prisoners, but the jail officials should be their friends and instructors. The one indispensable condition is that the State should buy all the *khadi* that may be turned out by the prisons at cost price. And if there is a surplus, the public may get it at a trifling higher price to cover the expense of running a sales depot."[103] Gandhiji believed that if his suggestion was adopted jails would be linked to the villages, they would spread to them the message of *khadi*, and discharged prisoners might become model citizens of the State.[104]

In a post-prayer speech delivered in the Delhi Central Jail in 1947, he said, ". . .all criminals should be treated as patients and the jails should be the hospitals admitting this class of patients for treatment and cure. No one committed crime for the fun of it. It is a sign of a diseased mind. The causes of a particular disease should be investigated and removed. They need not have palatial buildings when their jails became hospitals. No country could afford that, much less could a poor country like India. But the outlook of the jail staff should be that of physicians and nurses in a hospital. The prisoners should feel that the officials were their friends. They were there to help them to regain their mental health and not to harass them in any way."[105]

To *khadi* Gandhiji would not mind adding other industries.

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102 *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 205; *Y. I.*, I, pp. 1118 and 1122.

103 *H.*, July 17, 1937, p. 180.

104 *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 198.

105 *H.*, Nov. 2, 1947, pp. 395-96.

What he is concerned with is not so much the practical details as the principle that prisons should be regarded not as an agency created by society for vengeance on criminality, a symptom of the pathological state of society itself, but as a reformatory, a hospital and a school combined into one, maintained for the purpose of converting the defectives to the non-violent way of life.[106]

All the same Gandhiji recognizes that imprisonment is a punishment and as such coercive and "a fall from the pure doctrine".[107] A non-violent prison or imprisonment is as much of a contradiction as a non-violent State. The prison will, however, correspond to the State and society and aim at minimizing coercion.

In the non-violent State civil disturbances will also be minimized. There will not be many occasions for violent conflicts between groups. Besides, masses will have acquired the capacity to deal non-violently with violent outbreaks. Gandhiji writes, "So long as we are not saturated with pure *ahimsa* we cannot possibly win *swaraj* through non-violence. We can come into power only when we are in the majority or, in other words, when the large majority of people are willing to abide by the law of *ahimsa*. When this happy State prevails the spirit of violence will have all but vanished and internal disorder will have come under control."[108] Thus in the non-violent State there will be little likelihood of communal disturbances and serious labour troubles, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society.[108]

Gandhiji concedes that even in the non-violent State a police force will be necessary.[109] But he would transform the police system curing it of its present violent ways. He would demand of the policemen of the satyagrahi State the qualifications that he has prescribed for the volunteers of Peace Brigades. Thus he writes, "The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day

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[106] Mahadev Desai's article "No Compromise", *H.*, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 411.

[107] *Y. I.*, II, p. 862.

[108] *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 265.

[109] *Y. I.*, I, pp. 284, 641 and 1086; *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 441; and March 9, 1940, p. 31.

force. Its rank will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined to robbers and dacoits."[110] These will be very few in number in the non-violent State because there will not be much of private property and possession beyond needs will go with trusteeship.

He would permit the police to bear arms, for one of their functions would be to arrest those who commit crimes for non-violent treatment in prisons. The police would also use physical force to restrain, for example, a lunatic run amuck bent upon murder. Gandhiji would likewise concede such modern methods of preventing crimes as tear gas.[111] He admits that the use of tear gas is not justified in terms of the non-violent ideal. But he would defend its use if he found that he could not save a helpless girl from violation or prevent an infuriated crowd from indulging in madness except by its use.[112]

In 1940 the Congress Ministries in some of the provinces of India were taken to task by Gandhiji, for they failed to devise peaceful ways and means of preserving order and had to fall back upon the police and the military to suppress communal riots and labour trouble. He wrote, "To the extent that the Congress ministries have been obliged to make use of the police and the military to that extent, in my opinion, we must admit our failure."[112]

In Nov. 1946, during Bihar riots, the Prime Minister said that the Government would use even aerial bombing to put down communal violence. Gandhiji considered it the British way which would result in the suppression of India's freedom. He wrote, "Democracy to be true should cease to rely upon the

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110 *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 265. According to K. G. Mashruwala, "The true function of the police ought to be the *prevention* of crime. At present it practically consists in watching for criminals, and detecting and arresting them *after* a crime has been committed." See his *Practical Non-violence*, p. 21.

111 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

112 *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 197.

army for anything whatever....It will be a poor democracy that depends for its existence on military assistance. Military force interferes with the free growth of the mind. It smothers the soul of man."[113] In his post-prayer speech on Dec. 12, 1947, he remarked, "unless India developed her non-violent strength, she had gained nothing either for herself or for the world. Militarization of India would mean her own destruction as of the whole world."[114]

He is opposed not to the police as such, but to its present-day form and its out-and-out violent methods. Inability to do without the present police system is, to him, an indication of incapacity to hold power through non-violent means. As for the military, until 1931, he was willing to retain it.[115] Later, however, he disapproved of the use of military for maintaining civil liberties and internal peace.[116] He also definitely declared against the military as the means of defence against foreign aggression. He had always been "against compulsory military training in every case and even under a national Government."[117] In the non-violent State he would completely decentralize defence against aggression and injustice. Villages and even individual citizens should be capable of defending

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113 *H.*, June 9, 1946, p. 169.

114 *H.*, Dec. 14, 1947, p. 471.

115 *Y. I.*, I, pp. 641 and 1086; *Y. I.*, II, p. 924.

In the well-known interview that Gandhiji granted to journalists the day after the Gandhi-Irwin Truce, in answer to the question, if he envisaged the possibility of doing away with a national army when *Purna Swaraj* was obtained, he remarked, "As a visionary, yes. But I do not think it is possible for me to see it during my lifetime. It may take ages before the Indian nation may accommodate itself to having no army at all. It is possible my want of faith may account for this pessimism on my part. But I do not exclude such a possibility." He went on to add that mass-awakening and the adherence to non-violence on the part of the people filled him with some hope that Indian leaders would be courageous enough in the near future to say that they could do without any army. And even though armies may linger on he hoped that with due emphasis on non-violence they "may gradually be reduced to spectacular things, just as toys, remnants of something that is past and not as instruments of protection of the nation." *History of the Congress*, pp. 762-63.

116 *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308, article on "Civil Liberties".

117 *Y. I.*, Sept. 24, 1925, quoted in *For Pacifists*, p. 48.

their liberty against the whole world.[118] He was, however, in favour of a non-violent army.[119]

The police and the military are considered to be the limbs of law in the modern democracy. The satyagrahi State stands for the amputation of these limbs, particularly the military. The police, though retained, will be transformed. Even though Gandhiji concedes coercion, it is well to remember that he retains it in the background to be used when non-violent methods cannot be employed, that he prefers the lesser violence of reformatory punishment to the greater violence of crime and lawlessness and that this coercion is not the inadequacy of non-violence but an evidence of human imperfection. A fully non-violent man would be incapable of using violence and would have no use for it. His non-violence would suffice under all conditions.[120] While conceding minimum coercion, as an idealist he insists "that the use of force is wrong in whatever degree and under whatever circumstances".[121] He refuses to drag the ideal to the level of the actual, for this course, he believes, is the only way to the highest attainment.

The State will also perform the judicial function, though according to Gandhiji as much of judicial work as possible should be transferred to *panchayats*, i.e., *ad hoc* arbitration tribunals the personnel of which is usually determined by the parties to the case. Gandhiji has an intimate personal knowledge of the modern judicial system and its failings, having himself practised as a barrister in South Africa and India. He is a severe critic of the system and of lawyers and judges. The two are "first cousins"and much of what he says about lawyers also applies to judges. "The legal system teaches immorality. . . .The lawyers. . .as a rule, advance quarrels, instead of repressing them. . .their interest exists in multiplying disputes."[122] According to him, they are not entitled to more fees than labourers. As early as 1908 he discerned another great disservice of lawyers to India. "Those who know anything of the Hindu-Mohammedan quarrels know that they have been often due to

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118 See p. 303, *supra*.

119 *H.*, May 12, 1946, p. 128.

120 *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

121 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 42.

122 *Ibid.*

the intervention of lawyers."[123] Their worst crime was that they tightened the grip of the foreign Government. "Without lawyers, courts could not have been established or conducted, and without the latter the English could not rule."[123]

As for courts, he holds that it is wrong to consider that they are established for the benefit of the people. "Those who want to perpetuate their power do so through the courts. If people were to settle their own quarrels, a third party would not be able to exercise any authority over them."[123] The object of the court is thus the permanence of the authority of the Government which they represent.[124] Besides, "the decision of a third party is not always right. The parties alone know who is right. We, in our simplicity and ignorance, imagine that a stranger, by taking our money, gives us justice."[125] In so far as they support the authority of an unrighteous Government the courts are not "the palladium of a nation's liberty", but "crushing houses to crush a nation's spirit".[126]

Much of Gandhiji's criticism applies to the judicial system in the modern State. Practically everywhere the proverbial delays and uncertainties make litigation a kind of gambling. Everywhere the measure of a lawyer's ability is his capacity to confuse the judge and twist the issue, i.e., to make the "worse appear better reason" to the benefit of his client. Everywhere the judicial system favours the rich against the poor, the ruling classes against the masses. The system also tends to diminish respect for truth and tempts people to have recourse to perjury in order not to lose the case.

According to Gandhiji, "administration of justice should be cheapened....Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decision of *panchayats* to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified."[127] Lawyers may remain, but must not claim any superiority for their profession.

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123 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 43.

124 *Y. I.*, I, p. 351. For similar views of H. J. Laski see his essay on "Judicial Function" in *The Dangers of Being a Gentleman.*

125 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 43.

126 *Y. I.*, I, p. 350.

127 *Y. I.*, II, p. 436.

The true function of lawyers is to unite parties driven asunder.[128] Ideally lawyers must depend for their living on some form of bread-labour and serve people free. The second best course was that "all *bhangis*, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day's work."[129]

Thus Gandhiji would minimize the judicial work of the State. In the new State crimes and disturbances will diminish. People will ordinarily avoid courts and settle their differences by mutual compromise or private arbitration. In the few cases that come before the law courts of the State justice will be cheap, speedy and efficient.

The non-violent State will try to equalize the economic condition of the people with a view to secure social justice and economic freedom. To understand Gandhiji's views on this important function we may first briefly deal with the social and economic structure of the non-violent State.

The socio-economic structure of the Stateless society and the values in which it is rooted is the goal that the non-violent State will try to approach according to the moral capacity of its citizens. Before the non-violent State materializes, social equality must have been established, untouchability must have disappeared, caste rigidity loosened and economic life simplified and organized predominantly on the basis of handicrafts.

One important departure from the modified *varna* system of the classless society may be that in addition to enough bread-labour for primary needs people may earn more by additional physical and intellectual labour. This partial observance of the law of bread-labour may not be much of a difficulty in the non-violent State, for people will have taken to a life of simplicity. As they will have mastered the technique of non-violent resistance, over-possession will be possible only to the trustee.[130] "Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method."[131]

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128 *Autobiography*, I, p. 315.

129 *H.*, March 23, 1947, p. 78.

130 For a detailed discussion of trusteeship see pp. 85-87, *supra*.

131 N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, p. 201.

Due to the partial realization of the ideals of bread-labour and trusteeship the non-violent State will be able to achieve only equitable distribution of wealth unlike the Stateless society which will be characterized by equal distribution, or rather equality of non-possession. In other words, economic inequality will continue due to differences in the earning capacity of the people. But the disparity will be kept within proper bounds; for though people will continue to earn according to their capacity, the bulk of this earning will be used for the good of the community.

In the sphere of production the non-violent State will differ from the Stateless society in that the indispensable large-scale production as well as heavy transport may continue. Though non-violence can be built up only on the basis of self-contained villages and cottage industries, to Gandhiji "The supreme consideration is man."[132] He does not believe in forcing the pace. Centralized production and heavy transport are a hindrance rather than a help to right living. But Gandhiji is conscious of the difficulty that people feel in giving up the modern means of communications as well as heavy machinery for the work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour. Thus he would permit the use of steam and electricity after people have "learnt to avoid industrialism".[133] By industrialism Gandhiji means centralized production and the profit motive. Even while permitting a certain minimum of centralized production he would take away its sting, i.e., the profit motive. But the indispensable centralized production should be so planned as to subserve and not ruin villages and their crafts.[134]

For the minimum centralized production he would permit private ownership of the means of production if the capitalist raises the worker to the status of co-proprietor of his wealth, and both labour and capital work as mutual trustees and trustees of consumers.[135] But failing this he would accept State-ownership. These nationalized State-owned factories, he said in 1924, "ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity.

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132 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1029.

133 *Ibid.*, p. 1187.

134 *H.*, Jan. 27, 1940, p. 428.

135 *Y. I.*, III, p. 736.

. . . The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian consideration and not greed the motive."[136] In State-owned enterprises the workers should be represented in the management through their elected representatives and should have an equal share in the management with the representatives of the Government. But so far as possible he would avoid centralized production and the use of big machinery because their dangers are incomparably greater than their benefits.[137] It should also be remembered that he is against large-scale production of such elementary necessaries as food and clothing. The means of producing these should remain in the control of the masses and "should be freely available as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others."[138] Even in this sphere of production so long as villages aim at being self-contained and manufacture mainly for use, Gandhiji has no objection to "villages using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others."[139] He would permit "any machinery which does not deprive masses of men of the opportunity to labour, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave."[140] Similarly he is not against such modern technical facilities as can be used in decentralized cottage industries. Thus if electricity could be available in villages, he would not mind villagers plying their tools and implements with the help of electricity. "But then the village communities

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136 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1130.

137 "Mass-production through power-driven machinery," Gandhiji wrote in 1936, "even when State-owned, will be of no avail." (*H.*, May 16, 1936, p. 111). His views regarding dangers of big machinery are shared by many Western thinkers. Summing up the case for and against machines Stuart Chase comes to the conclusion that "machinery has so far brought more misery than happiness into the world". See his *Men and Machines*, Chs. XVIII and XIX. In his well-known book, *Technics and Civilization*, Lewis Mumford comes to the conclusion that maturity of social life will lead to the unemployment of machines and the replacement of old machines by smaller, faster, and more adaptable organisms adapted not to the mine, the battlefield and the factory, but to the positive environment of life.

138 *Y. I.*, III, p. 924.

139 *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

140 *H.*, June 22, 1935, p. 426.

or the State would own power-houses just as they have their grazing pastures."[141] Thus machines must not add to our ignorance. They must be such as can be understood by the village people and made and owned by them either individually or co-operatively. Such machines will not enslave man but be his instruments. They will lead neither to the concentration of economic power nor to exploitation and unemployment of the masses.

In regard to the *zamindari* system Gandhiji would fall back upon legislative confiscation only if *zamindars* failed to work as trustees of peasants and to remove the inequality between themselves and their peasants. He believes that "No man should have more land than he needs for his dignified sustenance" and is in favour of co-operative farming and collective cattle-farming.[142]

In short, in regard to the means of producing the prime necessaries of life he stands for decentralization and democratic control by individuals or voluntary organizations. As regards the unavoidable centralized production, he prefers private ownership to State-ownership, provided private owners act as trustees either voluntarily or through persuasion by non-violent non-co-operation. This preference is due to the fear of the State using too much of violence. But if owners fail to act as trustees, he would support a minimum of State-ownership with or without confiscation as the case may demand. But the State should deprive the people of their property when unavoidable with the minimum exercise of violence.[143]

The socio-economic structure of the non-violent State brings out the importance of the role the State will play in economic life in order to ensure social justice, to bring about economic self-sufficiency and to equalize the economic condition of the people. The State will promote small-scale industries. It will control forests, minerals, power resources and communications in the interests of the people. The State will regulate the rate of commission to be paid to the trustees for looking after, in the interest of the community, the wealth accumulated by

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141 *H.*, June 22, 1935, p. 146.

142 *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 97; Feb. 15, 1942, p. 39.

143 N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, p. 202.

them. The State will also finalize the arrangements made by the original trustee regarding his successor. Landlords and capitalists may fail to live up to the ideal of trusteeship and voluntary efforts of the people may be unavailing. In such a case the State will end the various systems of landlordism and own and manage, jointly with the representatives of the workers, the unavoidable centralized production.[144] For this purpose the State may have to resort to confiscation with the minimum violence.

Though Gandhiji gives to the State the duty of equalizing economic condition even by confiscation, it seems to be a half-hearted concession. For he expresses his distrust of State action and his preference of trusteeship, and of ownership by small units like village communities. He even considers the violence of private ownership as less injurious than the violence of the State.[145] In any case once the non-violent State is firmly established and necessary adjustments made in the socio-economic structure, economic life will become increasingly self-regulated and the need of State regulation will gradually diminish.

Gandhiji also advocates the revision of the revenue system so as to make the poor man's good the primary concern of the State. "All taxation to be healthy must return ten-fold to the tax-payer in the form of necessary services."[146] It must not fall like a dead weight on those who are least able to bear it. He is in favour of heavy death duties and raising the maximum limit of taxation of riches beyond a certain margin.[147] Nor must the State make people pay for their own corruption, moral, mental and physical. The non-violent State will have nothing to do, unlike the modern democratic State, with the income derived from vices.[148] It will withdraw the protection of the law that gambling on the race course enjoys today and will forgo the income from this source. Similarly Gandhiji is against the State legalizing brothels by issuing licences.[148] The proper method to deal with gambling houses and brothels is propaganda by the State as

144 *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 97.

145 *H.*, June 22, 1935, p. 146; N. K. Bose, cited above, p. 203.

146 *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 196.

147 *Ibid.*, p. 197.

148 *H.*, Sept. 4, 1937, p. 234.

well as voluntary organizations for educating public opinion in the right direction so as to stop the vices.[149]

On the basis of these moral considerations the non-violent State will completely wipe out the revenue from drink and drug traffic. As a means of conserving the moral and material welfare of the country prohibition of intoxicants has been for thirty years one of the chief items of the constructive programme of Gandhiji. In 1937 when the Congress ministries came into office in the provinces Gandhiji expounded his plan of complete prohibition within three years.[150] But in this as in other matters Gandhiji laid as much stress on voluntary effort as on State action. Imposing prohibition by law, i.e., closing down of drink and drug shops and thus removing the open temptation is merely the negative part of prohibition, the positive part being "a type of adult education of the nation", i.e., active systematic propaganda by voluntary organizations with the object of weaning the addicts. Propaganda also includes absolutely peaceful, silent and educative picketing and intimate personal contact with addicts.[151]

There has been a good deal of criticism that complete prohibition may not be practicable, may give rise to illicit traffic and will, due to great loss of revenue, result in the starving of education and other necessary social services. Gandhiji concedes that some illicit distillation may continue but so may thieving, and he would not on that account license either. To him man rather than money is the primary consideration. Rather than use the tainted money he would cut out the education budget, making education self-sufficing, effect other economies, tap other sources of revenue and even raise short-term loans.[152] Besides, economically also the nation will not be a loser. For the removal of this degrading tax enables the drinker, i.e., the tax-payer, to save his drink-bill and to earn and spend better which means a tremendous economic gain to the nation. Moreover, it is impossible to compute in terms of money the enormous moral,

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149 *H.*, Sept. 4, 1937, pp. 234-35.

150 The Congress ministries in various States of the Indian Union have adopted the policy of enforcing prohibition within a period of years. Some of the States are experimenting with total prohibition.

151 *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 196 and Oct. 9, 1937, p. 291.

152 *H.*, August 28, 1937, p. 229.

mental and physical advantages that will accrue from prohibition.

As regards taxes, Gandhiji would prefer payment in labour to payment in coin. "Payment in labour invigorates the nation. Where people perform labour voluntarily for the service of society, exchange of money becomes unnecessary. The labour of collecting the taxes and keeping accounts is saved and the results are equally good."[153] Payment in kind also implies the use of taxes for the benefit of the area from which they are gathered.

Another important duty of the State would be the education of the young. Gandhiji attached great importance to education as a means of social regeneration and would make education free and compulsory during the primary stage from the age of 7 to 14. He drew up a new plan of self-supporting primary education. This plan of basic education sprang out of non-violence and aims at rearing the younger generation on non-violent values with a view to their all-round development and at evolving the new non-violent democratic social order. It is 'basic' because it stands for the art of living.[154] Under basic education children learn through living.

The central feature of the new plan is education of the child through a useful productive craft, the application of the ideal of bread-labour to education and the recognition of the child's natural love for activity. The medium of instruction should be the mother-tongue and the education of all other subjects should be integrally related to the productive craft. According to Gandhiji, literacy is not the end but only one of the means of education. An intelligent use of the bodily organs of a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But this is a lopsided affair unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul. Training in a useful handicraft, when it is made the centre of education, establishes a purposive relationship between doing, learning, and living and brings about the harmonious development of the body, mind and soul.

The handicraft should be taught not mechanically but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the

153 *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 65.

154 *H.*, May 11, 1947, p. 145.

wherefore of every process. Things produced in schools should be marketable articles. Thus both the teacher and the pupil produce in the very act of teaching and learning.[155]

The syllabus effects a new orientation of subjects so as to eliminate narrow, exclusive, competitive nationalism and to emphasize the ideal of a united world. Thus the syllabus sets Indian history and Indian geography against a background of world history with special reference to social and cultural development of man and world geography with special reference to economic geography. Similarly the syllabus provides for the study of fundamental universal ethics.

Though schools will thus be almost self-supporting, the children earning their tuition by what they produce, the State will have an important function to perform concerning education. It will compel guardians to put their wards to school. It will be responsible for supervision, co-ordination and guidance of schools. It will take over the manufactures of these schools and find market for them. "Land, buildings and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupil's labour,"[156] and the State or local bodies will have to bear these expenses. The cost of education can be appreciably brought down by compulsory enlistment of the service of the youth for a year or longer before they begin their career. They may be paid a salary not exceeding their maintenance on a scale in keeping with the economic level of the country.[157]

According to Gandhiji self-sufficiency is the acid test of basic education. "This does not mean that basic education will be self-supporting from the very start. But taking the entire period of seven years, covered by the basic education plan, income and expenditure must balance each other. Otherwise, it would mean that even at the end of their training, the basic education students will not be fitted for life. That is the negation of basic education. *Nai Talim* without the self-supporting basis would, therefore, be like a lifeless body."[158] In 1945 he said, "My *Nai Talim* is not dependent on money. The running expenses

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155 *H.*, May 8, 1937, p. 104; Sept. 11, 1937, pp. 246 and 256; Oct. 9, 1937, pp. 291-92; July 31, 1937, p. 197.

156 *H.*, Oct. 30, 1937, p. 321.

157 *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 198 and Oct. 30, 1937, p. 324.

158 *H.*, Aug. 25, 1946, p. 283.

of this education should come from the educational process itself. Whatever the criticisms may be, I know that the only education is that which is 'self-supporting'."[158] Attempts are being made in some of the basic schools to work out the self-sufficiency aspect of the scheme.[159]

The self-supporting aspect of Gandhiji's plan has been subjected to severe criticism. In his scheme, however, economic efficiency and educational efficiency coincide. If some schools fall short of the self-sufficiency standard—in the beginning many may—they will at least keep an eye on economic efficiency. That will add to the scanty resources of a poor country like India and is the only practical way to universalize education.

A more serious objection to the plan is the large measure of socialization of industry that the scheme may involve, the State being required to market the produce of all persons at least up to the age of fourteen. But Gandhiji would in all likelihood decentralize the work and shift the responsibility to local bodies. Besides, it is also to be borne in mind that it is socialization tacked to handicrafts and not to centralized production. Basic education extending over seven years would equip boys and girls to earn their living, while participation in the day-to-day life of the school will train them up for citizenship in a non-violent democratic society.

The new plan should not clash with the interests of artisans. For one thing, education, instead of turning their children into drones, will enable them to eke out the scanty resources of the parents. It will also exalt the status of the artisan in society by recognizing labour as a moral force and build a bridge between theory and practice, industry and letters, artisan and student.

Politically the new education is of great significance "as the spearhead of a silent social revolution". In Gandhiji's words, "It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social

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[159] During the year 1945-46 in the basic school at Sevagram the pay of the teachers could be met from the income from the work of children in spinning, weaving and gardening. *H.*, March 2, 1947, p. 48.

insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right of freedom. And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands."[160] In short, the new plan is an invaluable step towards a self-supporting, non-violent, democratic social order, free alike of exploitation and social or class hatreds.[161]

In 1944 Gandhiji suggested that the scope of basic education should be extended and that it should become "literally education for life". Thus it should include pre-basic, post-basic and adult education. It should extend from the moment a child is conceived to the moment of death. Now the object of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, which had been confining itself to primary education, is to work out the programme of national education for life through manual activity and handicrafts. According to Gandhiji, education at all stages should be self-supporting, that is to say, in the end it should pay its expenses except the capital which should remain intact. Education at all stages should be imparted through the medium of the provincial language and should find its way to the homes of the students.

Gandhiji considered the present university education to be unsuited to the real requirements of the country. The vast amount of the so-called education in arts was sheer waste. It destroyed the mental and physical health of the students and led to unemployment. It did not fit people for independence but only enslaved them. It should be remodelled and brought into line

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160 *H.*, Oct. 9, 1937, p. 293.

161 The plan of basic education has been accepted by the Union and State Governments in India and is being worked out in the States of India. But the plan as worked out in States is mostly craft-biased and not craft-based. Unlike Gandhiji's plan, it does not make some basic productive craft the medium of education. It also ignores the principle of self-sufficiency.

with the basic education. The aim of university education should be to turn out true servants of the people who would live and die for the country's freedom.

According to Gandhiji, the State should pay for higher education when it has definite use for it. It should educate only those whose services it would need. The rest of the higher education should be left to private enterprise.

The responsibility for maintaining engineering, vocational and commercial colleges should be thrown on business and industrial concerns. Arts, agriculture and medical colleges should either be self-supporting or depend on voluntary contributions. The State universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged in examinations.[162]

Thus in regard to the functions of the State, though Gandhiji stands for the 'least government' and the minimum use of coercion, he is no doctrinaire. He supports confiscation of property under certain conditions and favours compulsory service for universal education, compulsory education, compulsory prohibition and the nationalization of the essential centralized production. This compulsion is a sign of the inadequacy of non-violence as evolved by the people to deal with problems demanding immediate solution. Gandhiji provides ample safeguards against too much of compulsion or violence being used by the State. These are decentralization, importance of voluntary associations, the democratic structure of the State, and a strong tradition of non-violent resistance.

The 'least government' of Gandhiji is not identical with the negative police functions. The non-violent State is not a mere *Polizeistaat*. The police and the military will be least in evidence in the non-violent State. Besides, to advance the welfare of the people Gandhiji favours some functions of a socialistic or even communistic nature—functions in which State action is likely to be much more conducive to the welfare of the people than voluntary action. But if Gandhiji is not an individualist of the *laissez-faire* type, he is not a socialist or a communist either, for he believes in non-violent means, in a handicraft civilization, simplification of life and decentralization.

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162 *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 197-98; Oct. 30, 1937, p. 321; July 9, 1938, p. 176; Nov. 2, 1947, pp. 392-93; Aug. 25, 1946, pp. 282-83.

The non-violent State will not be able to achieve as great a measure of decentralization as the Stateless society. This difference between the two is due to the fact that the people of the non-violent State will have capacity only for partial cultivation of non-violence, non-possession, and bread-labour. Over-possession and the minimum of large-scale production will continue, though the former will go with trusteeship, while the latter will be democratically managed and will subserve rural decentralized economy. But even in the non-violent State the emphasis will be on small groups, voluntary organizations and moral control, though the State will continue to perform its limited functions with the minimum of coercion.

One important safeguard against the misuse of authority is the system of rights. Gandhiji, however, attaches far greater importance to duties than to rights. Rights are the opportunity for self-realization. The way to self-realization is the realization of one's spiritual unity with others by serving them and doing one's duty by them. Thus every right is the right to do one's duty. To quote Gandhiji "...the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights."[163] Further, if a right is demanded or recognized without the claimant possessing the capacity to perform the corresponding duty, the purpose of the right is not attained and the right cannot be sustained. Gandhiji relates his experience thus, "As a young man I began life by seeking to assert my rights, and I soon discovered I had none —not even over my wife. So I began discovering and performing my duty by my wife, my children, friends, companions and society, and I find today that I have greater rights, perhaps, than any living man I know. If this is too tall a claim, then I say I do not know any one who possesses greater rights than I."[164] According to him, in most of the democratic States the right to vote has proved a burden to the people because it has been obtained by the use of physical force or its threat and not by acquiring any fitness for it.[165]

If one acquires the capacity to perform a duty, the

[163] *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

[164] Gandhiji's reply to Mr. H. G. Wells's cable on the Rights of Man. *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 320.

[165] *Hind Swaraj*, p. 61.

corresponding right must inevitably follow. The greatest duty is self-realization, i.e., cultivation of non-violent values or acquiring individual self-government. Thus according to Gandhiji, "we will become free only through self-suffering."[166] "There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duty. Hence rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them. . . to him who observes truth and non-violence comes prestige and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves. *Swaraj* of a people means the sum total of *swaraj* (self-rule) of individuals. And such *swaraj* comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty."[167] In his address to the Kathiawad Political Conference (1925), he remarked, "The true source of right is duty. . .if we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them the further they will fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: 'Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone.' Action is the duty; fruit is the right."[168]

Gandhiji, as the above extracts bring out, uses the term *right* not only with reference to the State, but in a wider sense, with reference to any and every aspect of social life. Once at least, it may be pointed out, he used the term in the sense of physical power. The relevant passage is: "Every one possesses the right to tell lies or resort to goondaism. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and the society."[169] Generally, however, he uses the term in the sense of freedom of action essential for the individual's self-realization.

Rights are created, not by the State or any other group, but by the individual himself as he develops fitness for the right by

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166 *Hind Swaraj*, p. 94.
167 *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.
168 *Y. I.*, II, p. 479.
169 *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

pursuit of truth and non-violence. The State and groups only recognize rights. The more non-violent a State is the greater will be the scope for individual freedom. According to Gandhiji, the natural corollary to the use of untruthful and violent means "would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *ahimsa*."[170] Gandhiji's theory of rights implies that the rights of different individuals may differ according to their moral capacities, i.e., the level of non-violence acquired by them.[171] Every right has not only the corresponding duty by performing which the right accrues but also a remedy for resisting an attack upon the right. That remedy is non-violent non-co-operation.[172]

The great advantage of his theory of rights is that it lays emphasis on social service rather than on the self-regarding propensities of the individual. As Gandhiji writes, "people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves."[173] His theory also lays stress on self-help and teaches us to overcome the adverse circumstances and to blame ourselves and not others in case we do not possess rights. Further, people who have realized the importance of duties are not likely to abuse their rights and exploit others.

Though the non-violent State will be free and equal in status to other States, satyagrahi nationalism is not exclusive, aggressive or destructive. On the other hand it is constructive and humanitarian.[174] One reason why it is constructive is that the means that it employs to fulfil itself is non-violence, the method of conversion and not of coercion. Besides, it is inspired by the ideal of world unity rooted in the highest truth, the

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170 *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

171 Cf. "The rights which different individuals may properly claim must vary according to their several ethical dispositions and capacities. Thus the man who by his striving has built up for himself an upright character has the right to demand from his fellow men a respect to which his less honest neighbour can make no proper claim." W. W. Willoughby, *The Ethical Basis of Political Authority*, pp. 246-47.

172 *Y. I.*, March 26, 1937, p. 49.

173 *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

174 *Y. I.*, I, p. 673.

spiritual oneness of mankind and stands for a country learning to live not by exploiting others but by serving others and dying for others. As such, non-violent nationalism is the essential pre-condition of sound internationalism. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1925, "...it is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist....It is not nationalism that is an evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil....Indian nationalism... wants to organize itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large."[175] Again, "We want freedom for our country but not at the expense or exploitation of others....I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world....My idea of nationalism is that my country may die so that the human race may live. There is no room for race-hatred there."[176]

Indeed this fulfilment of nationalism through truth and non-violence is in itself the greatest service to mankind. It should deliver the subject races from the crushing heels of imperialist powers. Says Gandhiji, "Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation....India's coming to her own will mean every nation doing likewise."[177] "...the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible (by the National Government)...will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order."[178]

Non-violent nationalism is a corollary to the doctrine of *Swadeshi* which lays down that one's countrymen are one's nearest neighbours and have the first claim upon one's

175 *Y. I.*, II, p. 1292.

176 Mahadev Desai, *Gandhiji in Indian Villages*, p. 170.

177 *Y. I.*, III, pp. 548-49.

178 *H.*, June 21, 1942, p. 197.

service.[179] Non-violent nationalism is thus essentially ethical and only incidentally political. It is a mere means and not an end, a means not only of securing the welfare of a people but also of serving humanity and advancing "the greatest good of all".

By national freedom Gandhiji does not mean absolute independence which is inconsistent with progressive internationalism. To quote him, "My notion of *Purna Swaraj* is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified inter-dependence."[180] "The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States."[181] According to him, the only condition on which the world can live is being united under one central governing body composed of representatives of the component parts.[182]

The international organization should be freely established and maintained by non-violence which can solve all the problems of the world. In 1931 speaking at Geneva about the League of Nations he remarked, "It (the League) is expected to replace war, and by its own power, to arbitrate between nations who might have differences amongst themselves. But it has always seemed to me that the League lacks the necessary sanctions....I venture to suggest to you that the means we have adopted in India supply the necessary sanction not only to a body like the League of Nations, but to any voluntary body or association that would take up this great cause of the peace of the world."[183] A non-violent world organization requires the giving up of armaments and of the use of force to defend even proved rights. "Proved rights should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e., sanguinary means."[184] For controlling violent outbreaks between States he

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179 See above, pp. 92-97.

180 *Y. I.*, March 26, 1931.

181 *Y. I.*, II, p. 438. Interdependence is, according to him, as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency, for man is a social being and his social interdependence enables him to suppress his egotism and to realize his oneness with the universe.

182 *H.*, June 8, 1947, p. 184.

183 Quoted in B. Sharga, *Gandhi*, pp. 389-90.

184 *H.*, Oct., 14, 1939, p. 301. Gandhiji, is against an "armed peace imposed upon the forcibly disarmed". According to him the retention of an inter-

may welcome an international non-violent police force resembling peace-brigades or the police force of the non-violent State. Before general disarmament commences, "Some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation. . .will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself."[185]

The world order and disarmament rule out imperialism. "There will be an international League only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. . . .In a society based on non-violence the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated."[186] Gandhiji thus stands for the establishment of just political and economic international relations and the ending of the domination of one State over another. For the elimination of imperialism it was necessary for great nations to shed competition and the desire to multiply wants and material possessions.[187]

The new world order will take time to evolve. Meanwhile there may be cases of international injustice and aggression. Aggression against a non-violent State will be unlikely and it will be easy for it to defend itself non-violently. The democratic socio-economic structure of the non-violent State being rooted in justice and equality, there will be no internal struggle for economic power which leads to imperialism or revolution.[188] Non-violence inside the State will also manifest itself in the foreign policy of the State. The non-violent Indian State, when it comes into existence, will endeavour "to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory."[189] As

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national police force is by no means an emblem of peace. Shedding of belief in war and violence is essential to the establishment of real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Gandhiji's statement on the San Fransisco Conference, April 17, 1945.

185 *Y. I.*, II, p. 863.

186 *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8 and *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 301.

187 *H.*, May 16, 1936, p. 109.

188 H. J. Laski, *Nationalism and the Future of Civilization*, p. 50.

189 *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 96, "Jai Prakash's Picture".

pointed out earlier, the non-violent State will share its material and moral resources with people across its boundaries.[190] Neither exploiting, nor being exploited, it will be at peace with the rest of the world. It will work for total disarmament and for the establishment of a non-violent international order. Its non-violence will command universal respect and arouse the goodwill of the neighbours. For its defence it will rely on the goodwill of the whole world.[191]

Even if the non-violent State is a victim of aggression non-violent defence would be an easy affair. The satyagrahi method of resistance evolved by Gandhiji to win freedom will be applicable, with necessary modifications, against foreign aggression also. In the words of Gandhiji, "A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-co-operate with the aggressor. Thus supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way will be non-violent resistance by a people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannon. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery."[192] Thus the satyagrahi State may have a non-violent army.[193]

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[190] See pp. 93-94 *supra*.

[191] *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 441.

[192] *H.*, April 13, 1940, p. 90.

[193] Referring to the training and discipline for a non-violent army Gandhiji wrote in 1946, "A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army." *H.*, May 12, 1946, p. 128.

According to Gandhiji, there is no place in non-violent resistance for the technique of 'scorched earth' adopted to circumvent the enemy and hamper his march. As a war resister he sees neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property. "There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. . . . Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity." Laws of war in olden times did not permit poisoning of wells and destroying of food crops. Whenever possible the non-violent resisters would stand between the crops and the aggressors so that the latter cannot help themselves to the crops so long as a single resister is living. Even if the resisters decide to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of later resisting under other and better auspices, Gandhiji favours non-destruction of food-crops and the like. He sees reason, sacrifice and bravery in leaving property intact, if the non-violent resister does so not out of fear but because he refuses to regard any one as his enemy —i.e., out of a humanitarian motive. Non-destruction involves bravery because the resister deliberately runs the risk of the enemy feeding himself at the former's expense and pursuing him, and sacrifice because the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles the resister.[194]

The question has sometimes been posed to Gandhiji as to how satyagraha could avail against aerial warfare in which there are no personal contacts. The person who rains death from above has never any chance of even knowing whom and how many he has killed. Gandhiji's reply is that "behind the death-dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still, is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. And at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely, bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the

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[194] *H.*, March 22, 1942, p. 88; April 12, 1942, p. 109; April 19, 1942, pp. 121-22; and May 3, 1942, p. 140.

tyrant, a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit."[195]

In one of the last interviews given by him, Gandhiji was asked, how he would use non-violence against the atom bomb. His reply was, "I would meet it by prayerful action. . . .I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I had not the face of evil against him. The pilot would not see my face at such a height, I know. But the longing in our heart that he will not come to harm will reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. Of those thousands who were done to death in Hiroshima by the bombs—if they had died with that prayerful action, died openly with prayer in their hearts without uttering a groan, then the war would not have ended as disgracefully as it has."[196]

But if people are to die non-violently rather than submit to the aggressor, who will live, it may be asked, to enjoy freedom? According to Gandhiji, "The soldier who fights never expects to enjoy the fruits of victory (in violent combat). But in the case of non-violence, everybody seems to start with the assumption that the non-violent method must be set down as a failure unless he himself at least lives to enjoy the success thereof. This is both illogical and invidious. In satyagraha more than in armed warfare, it may be said that we find life by losing it."[197]

If the victim of aggression is a non-violent country reared on a civilization based on cottage industries, the country will lose much less and will far more effectively resist such aggression than if she is dependent on a factory civilization. The enemy will gain nothing out of destroying the cottage crafts and the devastated country will take little time to recover. Writes Gandhiji, "Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process."[198] Thus the self-supporting non-violent State will be proof against temptations and exploitation. "Her internal economy will be the strongest bulwark against aggression."[199]

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[195] *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 394.

[196] Margaret Bourke-White, *Halfway to Freedom*, p. 323.

[197] *H.*, July 28, 1940, p. 228.

[198] *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 331.

[199] *Y.I.*, July 2, 1931.

According to Gandhiji, "...the weakest State can render itself immune from attack if it learns the art of non-violence. But a small State, no matter how powerfully armed it is, cannot exist in the midst of a powerful combination of well-armed States. It has to be absorbed by or be under the protection of one of the members of such a combination."[200]

It may perhaps be long before any State can mould itself according to the principle of non-violence. Gandhiji prescribes non-violent resistance even to the States which have so far depended on violence as the means of defence. But a State can use the non-violent technique only if it cleanses its hands of all ill-gotten gains, territorial or otherwise.

His prescription to the Abyssinians, the Czechs, the Poles, the English and other victims of aggression was to refuse to fight and yet to refuse to yield to the usurper.[201] Refusal to yield means not to bow to the supremacy of the victor and not to help him to attain his object.[202] Thus concerning China he once remarked, "If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery of destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining two hundred millions won't bend their knee to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave."[203] It was essential to non-violent resistance, he wrote later, that the Chinese must develop love for the Japanese in their hearts, not by remembering their virtues, but in spite of their misdeeds.

When their country was at war, Gandhiji expected the pacifists to do nothing to weaken their own Government so as to compel defeat. "But for fear of so doing they may not miss the only effective chance they have of demonstrating their undying faith in the futility of all war....This means that they put their conscience and truth before their country's so-called interest. For, regard for one's conscience, if it is really such, has never yet injured any legitimate cause or interest."[204] The pacifists

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200 *H.*, Oct. 7, 1939, p. 293.

201 See his appeal "To Every Briton", *H.*, July 6, 1940, pp. 185-86.

202 *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 254.

203 *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 394.

204 *H.*, April 15, 1939, pp. 89-90.

should not wish success either to their own country or to the enemy, but pray that the right should prevail. For, "It is very difficult to judge when both sides are employing weapons of violence which side deserves to succeed."[205] Whilst keeping themselves aloof from violence they should not shirk danger but serve friend and foe alike with a reckless disregard for their life.[206]

A non-violent neutral country should not allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. It should refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. It should also present to the invader a living wall of men, women, and children and invite the invaders to walk over their corpses. The invading army, it may be said, would be brutal enough to walk over the non-violent resisters. But the latter shall have done their duty by allowing themselves to be annihilated. Besides, "An army that does pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat the experiment." Gandhiji also favours the economic boycott of the aggressor nation by neutral States.[207]

It is the duty of the neutral State to extend this moral sympathy and non-violent support to the victim of international aggression, even if the latter chooses to put up violent resistance. Gandhiji distinguishes between aggressive and defensive violence and wishes the latter success, though he also wishes that resistance should have been non-violent.[208] If a victim is capable of uttermost bravery and selflessness and fights violently an unequal battle against an aggressor incomparably

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[205] *H.*, Jan. 28, 1939, p. 442.

[206] *Ibid.*

[207] In answer to a question by some Chinese visitors as to what the prospects of a boycott of Japanese goods by India were, Gandhiji replied, "I wish I could say that there was any great hope. Our sympathies are with you, but they have not stirred us to our depths, or else we should have boycotted all Japanese goods, especially Japanese cloth....Japan is not only conquering you but it is trying to conquer us too by its cheap flimsy machine-made goods...we too are a big nation like you. If we told the Japanese, we are not going to import a single yard of your calico nor export any of our cotton to you, Japan would think twice before proceeding with its aggression." Though in this passage Gandhiji has also in mind the economic aspect of *swadeshi*, he obviously stresses the economic boycott as a form of non-co-operation with the aggressor. *H.*, Jan. 28, 1939, p. 441.

[208] *H.*, Dec. 9, 1939, p. 371; *Y.I.*, II, p. 423.

superior in strength, Gandhiji would consider that violence almost as non-violence; for when there is no premeditated violence and when there is no capacity for proportionate violence, violent resistance means "refusal to bend before overwhelming might in the full knowledge that it means certain death." The Polish resistance of 1939 is an instance of this kind.[209]

Undoubtedly if all other States could unitedly offer against the aggressor State moral resistance, war and aggression would be wiped out, but this can be possible only if the moral level of the average individual in the various States rises considerably. The victim of international aggression would welcome such moral support, but it should be prepared to rely on its own non-violent strength and to act alone.

War is a cultural rather than biological phenomenon[210] and never before was it so costly or so indiscriminate and universal in its destructiveness as it is today. War also necessitates the establishment of dictatorship.[211] Besides being staggeringly des-

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[209] *H.*, Sept. 23, 1939, p. 281 and Sept. 8, 1940, p. 274.

[210] According to Marxists war is related to the economic competition between the classes in which the dominant class exploiting the others takes the initiative. H. C. Englebrecht (*Revolt against War*) has collected psychological, anthropological and historical evidence to sustain the thesis that "man is not war." Quincy Wright (*A Study of War*) comes to the conclusion that war is in the main a sociological rather than a psychic phenomenon and that there is no specific war instinct but numerous motives and interests which lead to aggression by human populations. Mannheim similarly believes that the nature of social institutions and social regimes determines whether man in the mass has a warlike or peaceful character and that human nature can very well do without war. See Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, I, p. 277, II, pp. 1199-1200, 1367-68 and 1385-89; Mannheim, *Man and Society*, pp. 123-24. R. D. Gillespie refers to a certain Indian tribe on the western American sea-board to whom it is impossible to talk about warfare, "for they do not have even the conceptual basis to enable them to understand it." See his *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, p. 219.

[211] Wright discusses how in the most recent stage of world-civilization war has made for instability, disintegration, inadaptability and inflexibility of social and political structures and despotism, rendering the course of civilization less predictable and continued progress towards achievement of its values less probable. The results of war, he shows, are indeterminable and its costs excessive. War, which was professionalized during 1648-1789 and capitalized during 1789-1914, has become total war since 1914. H. W. Speiegel defines total war as armed conflict between sovereign States, sponsored and waged by a society in arms with the aim of destroying the vanquished

tructive and expensive, war only deepens differences instead of settling them. In satyagraha, on the other hand, the loss in men will be much smaller than in war, with absolutely no expenditure in armament and fortifications. In earlier pages we have shown how the hardest heart must melt before the suffering of non-violence and how there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to suffer. The moral force created by genuine non-violent resistance of a State, though it may involve immense suffering, will produce incalculable moral effect and stagger the aggressor, the public opinion of the aggressor country will respond and the Government of that country will find it hard to carry their own people with them.

Gandhiji does not expect every citizen of a State, resorting to non-violent resistance for defence, to be a thorough-going *ahimsaist*, even as every citizen of a militarist country is not an expert in the military science. With a handful of experts and with a disciplined non-violent army that may bear the same proportion to the total population as does the violent army a country would be able to defy any aggressor.

Thus as the technique of defence against international aggression the need of non-violent resistance is most pressing and its efficacy seems to be certain.

The principles we have discussed in this chapter indicate the broad outline of the social framework which is likely to emerge from man's endeavour to reshape his life and environments according to the law of love. There is nothing final or fixed about these principles. In actual social adjustments these will be applied according to the urgencies of time and place in ways which cannot be foreseen today. Whether people will try to set up a non-violent State depends on whether they really desire liberty, peace and progress, i.e., genuine democracy. The establishment of peace and the fulfilment of democracy are

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nation. Total war is unrestricted in means, is fought with weapons supplied by modern technology, psychology and economics, and is characterized by mechanization, increased size of armies, intensification and nationalization of war effort, militarization and the breakdown of the distinction between the armed forces and the civilians in military operations. The development of the modern military technique has tended towards the military totalitarian State. H. W. Speiegel, *The Economics of Total War*, p. 37; P. Sorokin, *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, ch. VI; and Q. Wright, *A Study of War*, I, chapters IX, X and XII and pp. 129-31, 192, and 321.

synonymous with the cultivation of non-violence. Non-violence alone can reconcile national existence with international co-operation, even as it alone can harmonize individual liberty and social life.

The non-violent State will be a genuine democracy because it will be based on the largest possible measure of liberty and of equality of consideration. It will minimize exploitation and replace the master-servant and the capitalist-labour relationships by a new co-operative order based on rural culture. Equality of political rights will have a reality it lacks today, for it will be accompanied by decentralization and social and approximate economic equality. Functions will be related to capacities and the emphasis will be on service. Thus society will be simple enough to be within the grasp of the average man and yet rich in opportunity for a conscious life of freedom and individuality, service and constructive criticism.

CONCLUSION

The starting point of Gandhiji's philosophy is his faith in *Satya*. It is this Principle—and Gandhiji identifies it with God, Soul-Force, Moral Law, etc.—which holds the universe. This self-acting Force manifests itself in the creation, giving it a basic unity.

The entire Gandhian philosophy is derived from the principle of spiritual unity. Man being rooted in *Satya*, his growth and self-expression require him to know it and to hold fast to it, i.e., to be a satyagrahi. The greatest Truth being the unity of all life, self-expression consists in loving and serving all, i.e., in striving after "the greatest good of all". Loving service of all is non-violence. Thus *Satya* can be pursued only by non-violent means. Spiritual unity cannot be realized by divisive means. As a corollary Gandhiji insists that to achieve the greatest good of all means must be as pure as the end, and that there must be no dual code of ethics for individual and group conduct.

The greatest good of all towards which mankind is consciously or unconsciously working can be achieved when individual and social life express *Satya*. For the discernment of truth and development of soul-force Gandhiji recommends a course of discipline. This discipline consists in self-control acquired by the pursuit of non-violent values. To realize the nature of *Satya*, i.e., Absolute *Satya*, the satyagrahi must hold by *satya* as he discerns it, i.e., relative *satya*. He must be non-violent, because violence offends against the greatest *Satya*, the unity and sacredness of all life. Violence is, therefore, *asatya*. Non-violence means the largest love, love even for the evil-doer. It seeks to conquer evil by truth, to resist physical force by soul-force, i.e., to convert the evil-doer by undertaking suffering. Gandhiji distinguishes between the non-violence of the brave embraced as a creed out of inner conviction and the non-violence of the weak adopted as a measure of expediency. The former alone is irresistible.

To cultivate the non-violence of the brave the satyagrahi must shed fear and be humble. For this he must achieve *brahmacharya*, i.e., control, in thought, word and deed, over all

the senses. To be fearless the satyagrahi must have the right economic attitude which should be determined by the ideals of non-stealing, non-possession and bread-labour. Gandhiji believes that the satyagrahi grows spiritually as he simplifies his life to share the lot of the poorest and the lowliest. He should cease to depend on money and other material means. These do not count for much in matters of spirit. A certain degree of comfort is no doubt essential for the satyagrahi but this should not go beyond the proper limit. *Swadeshi*, which stands for an all-sided creative patriotism, lays down the only correct way of advancing the greatest good of all. According to this principle the satyagrahi should restrict himself to the use and service of his immediate surroundings in preference to the more remote.

This discipline necessary for the conscious cultivation of non-violence involves the control of our lower nature, specially the urges of sex, acquisitiveness, and pugnacity and the emotions of fear and anger. It implies rational asceticism and not forced repression. We have discussed the rationale of these non-violent values in Chapters III, IV, and V. These conclusions of Gandhiji follow from his premises (i.e., belief in soul-force, the ultimate end and the need for non-violent means), and together with them form a single whole pattern. If the object is pursuit of *Satya* through non-violent means, Gandhiji wants us to effect a revaluation of current values and strive after a life of inner harmony.

The non-violent discipline is indispensable for the leaders among satyagrahis, if society is to progress. Discipline is expected of satyagrahi followers also but not the high level of moral excellence required of the leader.

The disciplined satyagrahi is an effective, self-confident leader. He depends on the voluntary obedience of his followers and honours public opinion and democracy in group affairs but in regard to his own attitude he is guided by the promptings of his conscience. The leader aims at educating people in satyagraha so that society may evolve tendencies that will take from class and State their *raison d'etre*. He organizes the masses. The non-violent organization seeks to be an ideal democracy in which decisions are taken by majority only in routine matters and the dissent of the minority receives the fullest consideration

in matters affecting their specific interests. There is no room in such an organization for power politics and manoeuvring for the capture of party machinery. When resisting wrongs the organization becomes a non-violent army in which democratic methods are replaced by the unified control of the democratically chosen leader.

Satyagraha, being the relentless pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means, includes, in addition to non-violent direct action, all constructive activities. Thus satyagraha is not merely a collective technique of direct action. Indeed, to be irresistible as a technique of resistance it has to be practised in every detail of daily life.

Satyagraha in its constructive as well as cleansing aspects is the instrument of social regeneration. Constructive satyagraha develops the moral strength of the people and disciplines them for the use of non-violent direct action. Besides, it is the technique of transforming the existing social order along non-violent lines even before political power and State machinery are captured by satyagrahis.

The satyagrahi leader employs every legitimate means of propaganda. To him propaganda does not mean exploiting public opinion, or acquiring over it an illegitimate control, but educating it by strictly truthful and non-violent methods. Satyagrahi propaganda is, moreover, carried on not so much through the spoken and written word as through service and suffering. The constructive programme, which is "collective purificatory effort", is the best publicity for satyagraha.

As a form of resistance satyagraha is the technique of resisting injustice and settling conflicts. The satyagrahi aims at bringing about a change of heart in the opponent and awakening in him the sense of justice. If the satyagrahi's appeal to the opponent's reason fails, the former tries to melt the latter's heart by undertaking pure voluntary suffering. Gandhiji does not envisage the elimination of all conflicts, but aims at raising them from the destructive physical to the constructive moral plane where differences can be peacefully adjusted and antagonisms rather than antagonists liquidated.

As satyagraha integrates legitimate differences instead of suppressing them, it minimizes the risk of counter-revolution and its gains are likely to be stable. Resistance, when non-

violent, ceases to be negative and positively achieves, by the very exercise of soul-force, the approximation of the social order to the moral order. In satyagraha the building up of a co-operative social order based on justice and non-violence and the destruction of the unjust system based on exploitation go together. According to Gandhiji, the basis of non-violence being the belief that all men have infinite moral worth and should be treated as ends in themselves and not as mere means, non-violence alone is the democratic technique of freedom which can establish "self-rule in terms of the masses". There is nothing like defeat in satyagraha which thrives on repression and in which voluntary suffering is the instrument of success.

Gandhiji's social ideal is the classless and Stateless society, a state of self-regulated enlightened "anarchy", in which social cohesion will be maintained by internal and non-coercive external sanctions. But as this ideal is not realizable, he has an attainable middle ideal also—the predominantly non-violent State. Retaining the State in this second best society is a concession to human imperfection. Gandhiji distrusts the State because it is steeped in violence. He believes that for the State to be democratic, citizens must acquire the capacity to resist non-violently and misuse of authority. The non-violent State will not be an end in itself but one of the means for the achievement of the greatest good of all. It will not be a sovereign State but a service State. The State will be a federation of decentralized democratic rural satyagrahi communities. These communities will be based on "voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness", i.e., on a consciously slowed tempo of life in which emphasis will be on self-expression through the larger rhythms of life rather than quicker beats of the quest of power and pelf.

The non-violent State will perform limited functions using the minimum of coercion. Society in the non-violent State will be characterized by social and approximate economic equality. The economic life will be based on agriculture and cottage industries, though there will be a minimum of centralized production. The centralized production will be organized either on the basis of private enterprise, both labour and capital acting as mutual trustees and trustees of consumers, or failing this, on the basis of State ownership and joint management by the State and the representatives of workers. An important feature

of the economic life of the non-violent State will be the more or less complete self-sufficiency of small regions.

Gandhiji's plan of self-supporting education through productive handicrafts will establish an organic link between learning, doing and living and develop the whole of the child so as to make it a courageous, vigilant and active member of the non-violent social order.

Decentralization of political and economic power, reduction in the functions and importance of the State, growth of voluntary associations, removal of dehumanizing poverty and superfluity, the new education and the tradition of non-violent resistance to injustice—all these will bring life within the understanding of man and make society and the State democratic.

The non-violent State will co-operate with an international organization based on non-violence. Peace will come not merely by changing the institutional forms but by regenerating those attitudes and ideals of which war, imperialism, capitalism and other forms of exploitation are the inevitable expressions.

The philosophy of satyagraha is the philosophy of the integral man. To Gandhiji the real being in man is the spirit. The spirit is one in all and the service of the community in every sphere of life is the one way to realize this truth. Gandhiji does not neglect the legitimate physical demands of man, but he believes that the lower in man must be harmonized with the higher. Satyagraha is thus the philosophy of harmonious life co-ordinated under the direction of soul-force. It unifies the spiritual and the mundane, the ideal and the real, the individual and the social. Gandhiji makes social philosophy and social life instinct with *Satya* and informs *Satya* with the plenitude of living.

Thus Gandhiji's political theory is an organic part of his philosophy of life. The isolation of politics from moral principles in the name of science or realism is, to him, a trap to kill the soul. The method of non-violent resistance is a great contribution of his to the philosophy and technique of revolution. With greater thoroughness than any other thinker in the history of political thought he has explained how non-violence and democracy are integral parts of each other and how each can operate successfully only along with the other. His conception

of democracy, in which every individual has acquired the capacity to resist non-violently misuse of authority, in which the dissent of the minority get the maximum consideration and which is characterized by "the magnanimity of the majority", is in advance of the Western conception of democracy. In the absence of non-violence as the ruling principle of life, Gandhiji discounts the ethical pretensions of democracies in the West and regards them as an instrument of exploitation.

Similarly Gandhiji rejects the view of some of the Western economists that economics should be dissociated from ethical valuations. To him there is no sharp distinction between ethics and economics. His views on economic questions are an expression of his conviction that man's moral wellbeing must not be subordinated to the profit motive and money values and that economic activities like the rest of the human conduct should be so planned as to advance and not hurt moral welfare. Thus Gandhiji humanizes economics by subjecting it to the suzerainty of ethics.

But Gandhiji's philosophy, as he never wearies of reminding us, has no finality about it. He says he is searching for and experimenting with truth. The science of satyagraha is yet in the making. Even in regard to the fundamental aspects of his ideal he admits that logically there can be no absoluteness. All the same according to him there is a relative morality which is absolute enough for the imperfect mortals that we are.[1] His experiments, however, refer to the details of application rather than to the basic concepts of the ideal, though some important problems arising from the application of non-violence still await solution. But if we take into account the long history of warfare, the six decades during which Gandhiji has experimented with non-violence in group affairs appear too small a period for satyagraha to develop into a full-fledged science of peace.

As for originality Gandhiji's own judgment is: "...I represent no new truth. I endeavour to follow and represent Truth as I know it. I do claim to throw a new light on many an old truth."[2] Again, "I never claimed to be the one original satyagrahi. What I have claimed is the application of that

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[1] *H.*, Dec. 23, 1939, p. 387.

[2] *Y.I.*, I, p. 567.

doctrine on an almost universal scale."[3] Before his time the ideal of non-violence had come to be regarded a cloistered virtue. It lacked that fulness of meaning, the universality of application and the compelling appeal which Gandhiji has imparted to it. In demonstrating the applicability of non-violence to all situations of life, he has restated and reinterpreted the ideal. In his philosophy non-violence has grown and has been renovated. In so far as the survival and progress of mankind depend on non-violence, which is, according to him, the law of life, Gandhiji, who is the most authoritative exponent of non-violence in the contemporary world, has made an invaluable contribution to social and political thought.[4]

The philosophy of satyagraha is a great contribution to the cause of human welfare partly because Gandhiji is much more than a mere political thinker, statesman or academic philosopher. He is a seer, a creative moral genius whose one constant endeavour for about six decades has been the steady pursuit of moral discipline essential, according to the philosophical tradition of ancient India, for discerning *Satya*. His philosophy is based on what he considers to be the law of life and its growth, i.e., non-violence, the very soul of Truth, its maturest fruit. Gandhiji also feels that non-violence is his God-given mission. Thus, "I am confident that God has made me the instrument of showing the better way."[5] "God...has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India...."[6] Again, "My mission is to convert every Indian...and finally the world, to non-violence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, religious or social."[7]

At least on the grounds of expediency non-violence seems to be the price humanity must pay for its survival and growth. But will Gandhiji's message of satyagraha find acceptance on the part of the people in these dark and uncertain days when force and greed seem on the ascendant?

[3] *Y. I.*, III, p. 367.

[4] "I do not think," wrote the late Mr. C. F. Andrews, "that there has been any more vital and inspiring contribution to ethical truth in our generation than Mr. Gandhi's fearless logic in the practice of *Ahimsa*." *Speeches*, Introduction, p. 14.

[5] *H.*, Sept. 29, 1940, p. 302.

[6] *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 193.

[7] *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 410.

No doubt the science of satyagraha is not yet full-grown and those having vested interests or those dazed by modern civilization, with its emphasis on wrong values, find it so difficult to comprehend its message. It is possible, therefore, that due to ignorance mankind may fail to attain the necessary level of moral excellence. Perhaps, this insensate world, lost in its mad pursuit of wealth and power, may refuse to leave its selfish, sub-human ways. Satyagraha has then come in advance of its time. But man cannot break moral laws: in violating them he only breaks himself. Says Gandhiji, "no individual and no nation can violate the moral law with impunity."[8] If non-violence is the only correct way mankind must either adopt it or perish.

Gandhiji is, however, not pessimistic regarding the future of non-violence. Thus, "I can only say that my own experience in organizing non-violent action for half a century fills me with hope for the future."[9] "The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence."[10] "I feel in the innermost recesses of my heart...that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungering world."[11]

Satyagraha undoubtedly answers the deepest urge in men, the urge to be good and true, to love and to suffer. Besides, glaring inequalities, injustice, economic insecurity, hatred, fear and violence, which are so chronic in the modern world, increase by sheer contrast the appeal of satyagraha. Even before the discovery of the atom-bomb the message and the movements of Gandhiji had made a deep impression on the people all the world over.

Gandhiji feels that the future of non-violence depends on its coming to fruition in India and that of all countries it is India's destiny, due to her tradition of non-violence from times immemorial, to deliver the message of satyagraha to mankind.

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8 *Ethical Religion*, p. 48.

9 *H.*, Aug. 11, 1940, p. 241.

10 Gandhiji cited in G. Catlin, *In the Path of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 145.

11 Quoted in R. K. Prabhu and U. K. Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 145.

"It may take ages," he wrote in 1935, "to come to fruition. But so far as I can judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of the message."[12]

The future of non-violence in India depends on the sincerity of believers in non-violence—even though these genuine believers be, as they are likely to be, a small minority. To them Gandhiji's message is, "Let those who believe in non-violence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright in the midst of the present impenetrable gloom. The truth of a few will count, the untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a whiff of wind."[13] The masses will be won over not by the mere ideal but by a group of persons, resolutely, courageously and selflessly living up to that ideal and realizing it in action. This resolute minority will in its turn owe its inspiration to the leader. Says Gandhiji, "If non-violence disappears after me, the inference should be that there was no non-violence in me."[14]

This was Gandhiji's judgment on himself and a test of those who profess to accept his way. But of *Ahimsa* as the way of regenerating man and his society he was absolutely certain. He writes, "*Ahimsa* is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die to vindicate the ideal but *Ahimsa* will never die. And the gospel of *Ahimsa* can be spread only through believers dying for the cause."[15]

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[12] *H.*, Oct. 12, 1935, p. 276. He, however, always upheld the universal practicability of non-violence. But sometimes he felt that, "It may even be that what seems to me to be natural and feasible in India, may take longer to permeate the inert Indian masses than the active European masses." *Y.I.*, Sept. 3, 1925, p. 304.

[13] *Y.I.*, II, p. 1153.

[14] Quoted by G. D. Birla in *Bapu* (Hindi), p. 36.

[15] *H.*, May 19, 1946, p. 140.

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INDEX

ACLAND, RICHARD, 259n.
Acton, Lord, 24n.
Adams, G. B., 260n.
Aerial warfare, 308, 330-31
Agriculture, 90, 199, 201, 206-07, 252, 285
Ahimsa, see Non-violence
Ahmedabad, 206, 218, 240, 256-57
Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, 256-57
Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh, 178
Albigenses, 28
All-India Congress Committee, 176, 209, 220, 220n., 235-36, 241, 242
All-India Spinners' Association, 88, 177, 179, 199n., 200-02, 209-10
All-India Village Industries Association, 88, 177, 178n., 203, 210
America, 269n.
Anarchism, 5, 22, 30, 32ff., 155, 190, 274, 282ff., 302-03, 339
Anarchy, 229, 233, 257-58, 292, 294, 305
Andrews, C. F., 14n., 23n., 25n., 80n., 102, 164n., 233n., 342n.
Anger, 16, 35, 60, 64-65, 67, 134-35, 147, 186, 211, 217, 267
Aparigraha, see Nôn-possession
Arbitration, 36, 136, 256, 286, 311-12
Armaments, 286, 327, 335
Art, 111, 114-15
Arundale, George, 151n.
Asceticism, 34, 110ff., 337
Ashram, 167-68
Asoka, 18-19, 19n., 29
Asteya, see Non-stealing
Atheists, 42
Atma, see Soul
Atom bomb, 331, 344
Attlee, C. R., 259n.
BAKUNIN, 274, 282n., 290n.
Barker, E., 32n., 275n., 287n.
Bardoli, 119, 193, 207, 218, 235, 241, 247, 253, 267
Baroda, 248
Beales, A.C.F., 22n., 29n.
Bellegarigue, Anselm, 30
Bhagwadgita, 11-13, 24-25, 35, 44n., 54, 94
Bhagwandas, Dr., 279n.
Bible, 23ff., 45n., 49n., 80n., 89n.
Birla, G. D., 197n., 344n.
Birth-control, 79
Boetie, E. de La, 28
Bombay, 34n., 148, 169, 175, 236, 248
Bondaref, 90n.
Borsad, 207
Bosanquet, B., 46, 293
Bose, J. C., 46
Bose, N. K., 51n., 84n., 86n., 261n., 282n.
Boycott, 232, 236, 262-63;—Economic, 23, 97, 227, 233, 236, 274, 333;—Social, 227, 229-31, 237-38, 265, 288n.
Brahmacharya, 56, 77ff., 337; see also Celibacy
Brahmana, 8
Bread-labour, 69, 83, 90ff., 110, 179, 196, 284-86, 299, 312-13, 337; see also Manual labour
Brinkman, Carl, 258n.
Britain, 23, 87, 149, 169, 172-73, 220, 245-46n., 268, 269n., 274n., 276, 295-96, 332
Brockway, F., 37n.
Brownists, 28
Brutalization, 143-44
Buddha, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 75
Buddhism, 14-18

P.G.–23

CALCUTTA, 11, 149
Capitalism, capitalist, 3, 31, 33, 86-87, 133, 272, 274-75, 285, 295
Carlyle, 31
Case, C. M., 22-23n., 29n., 30n., 37n., 127n., 254n., 262, 268
Celibacy, 19, 34, 81; see also *Brahmacharya*
Centralized production, 197-98, 252, 285-86, 290, 313
Champaran, 207, 219, 241, 253
Change of heart, see Conversion
Chase, Stuart, 314n.
Chaurichaura, 146, 218n., 236
Chesley, Mary, 119
Children, 75, 163, 277, 288, 318ff.
China, 22-23, 220, 332
Christ, see Jesus Christ
Christianity, 11, 24-28
Civil Disobedience, 30, 95, 126-27, 135, 144, 172-73, 192-93, 214-19, 222, 227, 231ff., 235-36, 238ff., 248, 260-61, 265; assertive, 242-45; defensive, 215, 218n., 242-43; individual, 192, 242-43, 245; mass, 192, 241-45; see also Non-co-operation, Non-violent direct action, and Satyagraha.
Civil resister, see Satyagrahi
Close, Upton, 222
Coercion, 5, 86, 116, 122, 151, 153, 161, 164, 184, 207, 214, 230-32, 254-55, 260ff., 287, 289, 292, 303-05, 307, 310; see also Compulsion, Force and Violence
Communal unity, 180, 195, 200, 204, 210, 211, 213, 235, 279
Communism, Communists, 6, 36, 54, 84, 87, 274ff.
Competition, 5, 63n., 95, 285, 286
Compromise, 34, 121, 136ff.
Compulsion, 122, 193, 227, 229, 264ff., 278; see also Coercion
Conflict, 36, 71, 117, 121, 128, 132-35, 137-38, 154, 162, 165, 184, 214, 217, 227, 237-39, 249, 251, 254, 257, 269, 277-78, 307
Confucius, 22
Congress, see Indian National Congress
Conscience, 3, 31, 44, 59-61, 83, 110, 111, 117-18, 120-21, 125-26, 133, 148-49, 239-41, 257-58, 260, 287-88, 294, 296, 300, 332
Conscientious objection, 268
Constantine, 28
Consent, 227-28, 268, 297
Constitutional methods and non-violent resistance, 126-27, 239, 257ff.
Constructive programme, 97, 172, 177-79, 181, 190ff., 216, 234, 240, 246, 250, 338-39
Control of palate, 81
Conversion, 27, 134-35, 139ff., 146-47, 152-54, 170, 196, 227, 249, 254-55, 265, 301, 339
Coomaraswamy, Ananda, 16n., 17n., 18n., 19n., 43n.
Co-operation, 63n., 85, 170, 197, 207, 260, 283, 315
Co-ordination Committee, 178
Courts, 33, 153, 232-33, 286, 310ff.; see also Justice
Cottage industries, 157, 179, 195, 198ff., 252, 273, 285; see also Handicrafts and Village industries
Cowardice, 72-73, 82, 132, 161, 164
Crime, 36, 154ff., 239, 257-58, 269n., 303ff., 310, 312
Cripps, Sir Stafford, 259n.
Czechoslovakia, 332

DANDI, 187
Davids, Rhys, 9
Deak, Francis, 37
Decentralization, 117, 173, 194, 284, 298, 303, 322
Declaration of the Rights of Man, 259
Defeat, 74, 268ff.
Defence, 33, 35, 72-73, 88, 133, 138, 155-59, 160-61, 204, 221, 283-84, 309-10, 328ff.
Delhi, 149

Democracy, 3, 31, 35, 61, 116-17, 122, 125, 130, 151-52, 160, 161, 172-75, 194, 197, 204, 209, 220, 227, 239, 252, 260-61, 276, 280ff., 339-41
Depressed classes, see Untouchables
Desai, Mahadev, 34n., 89n., 127n., 293n., 307n.
Dharasana 243, 267
Dharma, 287f.
Dhurna, 20, 231
Dictatorship, 3, 36, 122, 173-74, 268, 270, 271, 276, 296, 301
Discipline, 9, 44n., 48ff., 76ff., 108ff., 116-17, 122-24, 126, 132, 153, 161, 166, 172, 174, 178, 179, 181ff., 186, 191, 200, 211ff., 215, 216, 218n., 221, 224, 230, 237, 240-42, 243-45, 251, 266, 267, 337-38
Divisive emotions, 101-02, 108-09, 135, 137-38, 161-62, 249, 263, 267, 337
Doke, J. J., 20n., 24, 33
Doukhobors, 30, 247
Dunkers, 28

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, 36, 83ff., 196ff., 284ff., 295, 312ff., 340-42
Education, 33, 95, 113, 163-64, 183, 191, 195-96, 205-06, 210, 232-33, 236, 289n., 301, 307, 317ff., 340
Elections, 170ff., 232, 297ff.
End, 5, 36, 39, 53ff., 107f., 280, 336, 338
Englebrecht, H. C., 334n.
Epictetus, 23
Equality, 84, 92, 99, 205, 207, 285, 292, 296, 304, 312, 328;—economic, 196-97, 201, 285, 296, 312
Erasmus, 28
Ethical principles, 38-39, 53ff., 76ff., 103ff., 117ff., 319, 337-38, 342-43
Evil, 34, 39, 51-52, 55, 61, 66-67, 73, 128, 134, 144, 229, 263, 290
Evil-doer, 61, 66-67, 135, 144-45, 225, 237; see also Wrong-doer
Excommunication, see Boycott
Exploitation, 5, 34, 64, 85, 95, 142, 154, 165, 178, 192, 194-96, 249, 252, 257, 271, 274, 276, 281-82, 285, 291, 295, 296, 298-99, 302, 314, 331

FAILURE, see Defeat
Faith, 47-49, 117-19
Farmers, 31, 196, 206-07, 252-53, 261, 286, 315-16
Farquhar, J. N., 34n.
Fascists, 6, 54, 163, 174, 271
Fasting, 20, 44, 95, 110, 123-24, 140, 146ff., 204, 212, 227, 231, 250, 266; see also Hunger-strike
Fear, 61, 72-73, 82-83, 101, 267, 274, 332
Fearlessness, 72ff., 82ff., 89, 338
Fischer, Louis, 119, 138, 253n., 294
Force, 26, 32-33, 40-42, 46, 67, 73-74, 134, 160-62, 227, 262-64, 268, 270, 308-09; see also Coercion, Compulsion and Violence
Fox, George, 29
Franchise, see Vote
Freedom, 35, 39, 50, 59, 126, 130, 176, 204, 219-21, 226, 229, 239, 241-42, 246-47, 259, 261, 269, 271, 276, 280, 283, 285, 287, 292-93, 295, 297, 302-04, 308-10, 325
Fullop-Miller, R., 65n., 111n., 114n.

GANDHI-IRWIN PACT, 271, 305n., 309n.
Gandhi, M. K., on aggressive satyagraha, 242-45;—on art, 114-15;—on boycott, 230-31, 236-38;—on *brahmacharya*, 76ff., 177, 178;—on bread-labour, 90ff.;—on capitalism, 253ff.;—on centralized production, 197ff., 313ff.;—and Christ, 24-28;—on civil disobedience, 238ff.;—on coercion, 260ff.;—on compromise, 136ff.;—and Congress organization, 168ff.;—on constructive programme, 189ff.;—on courts, 310ff.;—on crime, 154ff., 310ff.;—on defence against foreign aggression, 328ff.;—on democracy, 281ff.;—on *dhurna*, 231 —on discipline, 76ff., 171ff., 182ff., 211ff.;—on education,

317ff.;—on ends and means, 53ff.;—on equality of religions, 99ff.;—ethical principles of, Chs. III, IV and V;—on fasting, 123-24, 146ff.;—on freedom of will, 50-51;—on the future of satyagraha, 343ff.;—on God and soul, 39ff.;—on *hartals*, 229-30;—on *hijrat*, 247ff.; on human nature, 103ff.;—on humility, 100-01;—on individual satyagraha, 242ff.;—and his influence on the Congress, 174ff.;—on international organization, 327-28;—on jails, 155, 305ff.;—on *karma*, 49-50;—on *khadi*, 196ff.;—and Khudai Khidmatgars, 180ff.;—and labour, 253ff.;—on leadership, 84ff., 116ff., 165ff.;—on machines, 285-86, 313ff.;—on mass satyagraha, 242ff.;—on the meaning of satyagraha, 126ff.;—on military, 308-10;—and mystical experience, 43-44, 125;—on nationalism, 325ff.;—on non-co-operation, 145ff., 227ff.;—on non-possession, 83ff.;—on non-stealing, 83ff.;—on non-violence, 61ff.;—on the non-violent State, 279ff.;—on peace brigades, 180, 250;—as a philosophical anarchist, 282ff.;—on picketing, 229, 231;—on police, 307ff.;—on prayer, 123-25;—on propaganda, 184ff.;—on public opinion, 118ff.;—on rebirth, 49;—on renunciation, 118ff.;—on rights and duties, 323ff.;—and Ruskin, 31-32;—on sabotage, 224;—as a satyagrahi leader, 117ff.;—and the science of satyagraha, 6, 7, 59-60, 280, 341ff.;—on scorched-earth policy, 330;—as a seer, 343;—as a social scientist, 60, 341ff.;—on strikes, 254ff.;—on suffering, 112ff., 139ff.;—on suspension of satyagraha, 214ff.;—on *swadeshi*, 92ff.;—on taxation, 316-18;—and Thoreau, 30-31;—and Tolstoy, 32-35;—on trusteeship, 85-87, 197, 313ff.;—on truth, 56ff.;—on universal applicability of satyagraha, 128, 161-63, 166, 266ff.;—on untouchability, 97-98;—on village industries, 195ff.;—on volunteers, 178ff.;—on vows, 56-57;—on the *zamindari* system, 252-53, 315-16

Gandhi, Mrs. Kasturba, 137

Gandhi Seva Sangh, 177, 186

Giddings, 267n.

Gillespie, R. D., 84n., 334n.

Gniest, R., 259n.

God, 7, 30, 39ff., 53, 57, 62-63, 66, 72, 76, 82, 83, 88f., 99, 101, 105, 107, 110f., 118-19, 123-25, 147-48, 151, 166, 182, 211, 213, 225, 251, 258, 343

Godwin, 290n.

Gokhale, G. K., 4

Goseva Sangh, 178

Government, 35, 227ff., 249, 251ff., 259-60, 268, 269, 270, 273, 274n., 276, 278, 280-81, 291-92, 294ff.

Government of India, 87, 146, 149-50, 172, 236, 251, 253, 265-66, 273

Greece, 23

Green, T. H., 293

Gregg, R. B., 37n., 59, 62n., 193, 198n.

Gujarat, 14, 247, 294

Guntur, 236

HALLAM, 259

Handicrafts, 179, 197ff., 285, 312ff., 331; see also Cottage industries and Village industries

Hardinge, Lord, 259n.

Harijan Sevak Sangh, 177, 210

Harijan weeklies, 188

Harrison, Miss Agatha, 134, 144

Hartal, 179, 187, 229-30

Hatred, 16-18, 61, 63, 67, 74, 134, 187, 239, 254

Heard, G., 36

Heber, Bishop, 20

Hegel, 46, 293

Henderson, E. H., 184n.

Hijrat, 20, 227, 247f.
Himalayan blunder, 240
Himsa, see Violence
Hindu, 9ff., 38, 42, 149, 204, 209, 213
Hindu-Muslim Unity, see Communal unity
Hindustani, 206
Hindustani Talimi Sangh, 178, 178n., 210
Hocking, W. E., 24n., 299n.
Hodgskin, Thomas, 290n.
Holmes, J. H., 39n., 151n., 254
Holst, R., 36
Hook, S., 274n., 276n.
Hoyland, J. S., 131n.
Human nature, 31-32, 38, 67, 105ff., 163-64, 266-68
Humility, 100-01, 143, 337
Hunger-strike, 147n., 231; see also Fasting
Huxley, A., 37n., 55, 81
Hyderabad, 251

IDEALS, 70, 106ff., 290, 302, 345; see also Ethical principles
Imperialism, 95, 197, 218, 246n., 292, 295, 328
Imprisonment, 211f., 226, 273n., 305ff.
India, 4, 9ff., 87, 95ff., 209, 220, 245, 247, 249ff., 269, 271, 272, 279, 288, 289, 297ff., 308ff., 344-45
Indian National Congress, 71, 121, 160, 168ff., 177, 192, 200, 209, 226, 235ff., 245, 306, 308
Indian Opinion, 165, 188
Individual, 5-6, 33-36, 52-53, 86, 155, 194-95, 266-67, 274, 277, 282ff., 309-10, 314-15, 325, 337, 341
Individualism, 6, 194, 195, 287, 322
Individual Satyagraha, 242ff.
Intellect, 46-47, 115-16, 118-19
Internationalism, 93-94, 325-27
International organization, 327, 341
Islam, 21-22
Israelites, 247

JAIL, 155-56, 212, 236, 240, 305ff.
Jainas, 13-14, 131
Jainism, 13-14
Jaipur, 241
Jambusar, 247
Japan, 23, 274n., 332, 333n.
Jesus Christ, 4, 24ff., 32, 57n., 59, 75, 89, 93n., 125n.
Jews, 24, 93n., 289n.
Joad, C. E. M., 36
Johnstone, P. D. L., 21n.
Joy, 113, 125n., 139
Judaism, 23
Justice, 260, 271, 277, 309ff.

KALELKAR, KAKA, 87n.
Kant, 47, 48
Karachi Congress, Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Duties, 299n.
Karma, 11, 13, 49-50, 54
Kashmir, 169
Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust, 178n., 205
Kathopanishad, 113n.
Kavitha, 248
Khadi, 96-97, 179, 183, 195ff., 209, 211, 232, 235, 246, 265, 306
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, 180f.
Kheda, 207, 241, 253
Khilafat, 218n., 219, 232
Khudai Khidmatgars, 180f.
Killing, 35, 64, 68-69, 73, 164, 182
Kripalani, J. B., 62n.
Krishna, 12-13
Krishnadas, 125n., 187n., 236n.
Kropotkin, 63n., 274, 290n.
Kshatriyas, 8-9

LABOUR, 206-07, 274n., 278, 307, 313
Landlord, 249, 253, 272
Lao Tse, 23
Laski, H. J., 3n., 258n., 275n., 311n., 328n.
Lawyers, 232-33, 286, 310ff.
Leader, Leadership, 60, 76ff., 101, 109, 117ff., 138, 165ff., 173-74, 177, 183, 192, 209, 216-18, 220-22, 227, 236,

240ff., 251, 267, 271, 279, 295, 338-39, 344
League of Nations, 327-28
Legislatures, 172, 232, 236, 245, 294ff.
Lenin, V. I., 275, 290n.
Lester, Muriel, 187n.
Liberty, see Freedom
Ligt, Bart de, 23n., 28n., 29n., 30n., 275n., 277n.
Lloyd, Sir George, 271
Lok Sevak Sangh, 176, 209
Lollards, 28
Lothian, Lord, 292
Love, 32-33, 42, 44, 61, 63, 65-67, 73, 74, 79, 106, 109, 112-13, 116, 131, 134, 138, 142, 144, 145, 151-53, 156, 159, 161-62, 166, 182n., 185, 249, 259, 261, 267, 270, 285, 299, 332, 337

MACHINES, 286, 313ff.
MacMurray, J., 24n., 26n.
Madras, 235, 289
Magna Charta, 259
Mahabharata, 10-11
Majority, 121, 149, 170, 174, 204, 230, 265, 268, 300-01, 307, 338
Manual labour, 31, 33, 90, 297, 299, 338; see also Bread-labour
Manicheans, 28
Mannheim, K., 278n., 334n.
Manusmriti, 78
Marcus Aurelius, 23
Marriage, 33, 78
Marx, Marxists, 6, 87, 274-75, 334n.
Mashruwala, K. G., 308n.
Masses, 35, 75, 88, 90, 91, 103, 105, 109, 126, 131, 138, 147, 151, 163, 166-67, 179, 184, 187-88, 191-92, 197, 200, 206, 208, 220, 223-25, 228, 233ff., 252, 266ff., 289, 292, 296, 307, 311, 314-15, 338, 345
Maude, A., 32n.
Mead, Margaret, 289n.
Means, 5, 34, 36, 51ff., 61-62, 117, 127-28, 168-69, 177, 196-97, 273-74, 280-81, 325, 337-38
Mecca, 247
Medina, 247
Meetings, public, 186-87, 242-43
Mehta, Narsinha, 20n.
Meijer-Wichmann, 36
Mennonites, 28
Merriam, C. E., 258n., 259n., 269n.
Metta Sutta, 17
Military, 19, 28-33, 232, 235, 268, 273, 274n., 276, 286, 290, 308-10
Minority, 121, 149, 170, 174, 204, 230, 265, 300-01, 338
Modern civilization, 3-4, 34, 95, 108, 113, 344
Mohammedans, Muslims, Mussalmans, 149, 180, 204, 213
Mott, Dr., 89
Mukerji, R. K., 19n.
Mumford, Lewis, 198n., 314n.
Murray, Gilbert, 121n.
Murray, James, 184n., 264n.
Mutual aid, see Co-operation
Mystical experience, 44-45, 125

NADIAD, 218n., 240
Nag, Kalidas, 32n., 55n.
Naine, C., 36
Nanda, G. L., 286n.
Nation, nationalism, 5, 23, 93-94, 233n., 268, 274, 302-03, 309n., 311, 319, 325ff.
Native States, 220, 241
Nature cure, 196, 207, 286
Navajivan, 188
Nazi, 271
Negotiations, 136ff., 255
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 115n., 262, 264n.
Nehru, Motilal, 219
Newman, Cardinal, 279
New Zealand, 37
Niebuhr, Reinhold, 269n., 277n.
Noakhali, 186, 204, 250
No-changers, 171
Non-co-operation, 30, 33, 86, 95, 97, 126, 135, 142, 144ff., 159, 161, 197, 227, 260ff., 265, 281; see also Civil Disobedience, Non-payment of taxes, Non-violent direct action and Satyagraha

Non-embarrassment, 214ff., 239, 246, 254-55
Non-payment of taxes, 30, 35, 232ff., 242, 253
Non-possession, 19, 56, 60, 83ff., 110, 156, 166, 196, 252, 284-85, 338
Non-resistance, 29, 127n.
Non-stealing, 56, 60, 83ff., 196, 338
Non-violence, 4-5, 8ff., 16, 17, 40, 46, 56, 59, 61ff., 76, 78, 84, 86, 102-03, 108, 111, 115ff., 126ff., 165ff., 177, 178, 207ff., 279ff., 337ff.;—and army, 310, 329, 344-45;—and *brahmacharya*, 76ff.;—and bread-labour, 90ff.;—and coercion, 260ff.; —and crime, 154ff., 304ff.;—and defeat, 74;—and democracy, 281ff.; —and faith in God, 39-40;—and fasting, 123-24, 146ff.;—and fearlessness, 82-83;—the future of, 343ff.;—the history of, Ch. I;—and humility, 100-01;—and international organization, 327-28;—and jails, 154-56, 305ff.;—and killing, 64ff.;—and *khadi*, 195ff.;—and labour, 253ff.;—and leadership, 76ff., 117ff., 165ff.;—the meaning of, 63ff.;—and nationalism, 325ff.;—and non-possession, 83ff.;—and non-stealing, 83ff.;—and occupations, 69;—and physical force, 73-74, 162;—and prayer, 123-25;—and public opinion, 117ff.; —and renunciation, 111ff.;—and the State, Ch. XI;—and suffering, 112ff., 139ff.;—and trusteeship, 85ff., 197, 313ff.;—and truth, 60ff.; —various grades of, 70ff.;—as the way of life, Ch. VII;—the working of, 140ff.; see also M. K. Gandhi, Non-violent direct action and Satyagraha
Non-violent direct action, 36, 67-68, 102, 122-23, 126-27, 152, 175, 182, 190-94, 208, 214ff., 249ff., 287, 290, 294, 302, 312, 338-39;—aggressive aspect of, 242ff.;—and anarchy, 259;—and coercion, 260ff.;—as the collective technique, Chs. IX and X;—and compromise, 137ff.;—and constitutional methods, 257ff.;—and constructive programme, 189ff.;—as defence against foreign aggression, 328ff.;—defensive aspect of, 242ff.;—discipline for, 76ff., 181ff., 211ff.; in dyadic conflicts, Ch. VII;—forms of, Chs. VII, IX;—and leadership, 165ff.;—and money and numbers, 224ff.;—and non-embarrassment, 214ff.;—and non-political conflicts, 249ff.;—and propaganda, 184ff.;—objective of, 219ff.;—and oppression, 267ff.;—and organization, 165ff.;—and sabotage, 224;—and scorched-earth policy, 330ff.;—and suspension, 214ff.;—and violence as the technique of revolution, 273ff.; see also Boycott, Civil Disobedience, *Dhurna*, Fasting, *Hijrat*, Non-co-operation, Non-payment of taxes, Picketing, Revolution, Satyagraha and Strike.
Non-violent resisters, see Satyagrahis
Non-violent society, 281ff.;—economic condition of, 284ff.;—possibility of, 287ff.;—and primitive tribes, 289-90n.;—social condition of, 282ff.;—social cohesion in, 286ff.
Non-violent State, 279ff., 291ff.;—the end of, 302;—and foreign aggression, 328ff.;—the functions of, 302ff.;—the international status of, 292, 325;—a means, 293, 302;—the political structure of, 292ff.;—the socio-economic structure of, 312ff.
North-west Frontier Province, 60, 157, 180ff., 267, 273
Norway, 37

OPEN DEALING, 222ff.
Organization, 165ff., 282ff.

Ostracism, see Boycott (Social), 227, 288

PACIFISM, PACIFISTS, 22, 28ff., 70, 332-33
Pakistan, 169, 181, 204
Panchayats, 177, 209, 283, 288, 298, 310, 311
Panchasilani, 16
Parallel government, 233, 241
Parliament, 294ff.
Passive resistance, 20, 30, 35, 37, 127ff., 214, 261, 266
Patanjali, 9
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 253
Pathan, 60, 181, 267
Patricians, 23, 247
Paulicians, 28
Peace brigades, 180ff., 250, 307
Pearson, Drew, 271
Pennsylvania, 29-30
Penn, William, 29
Persuasion, 86, 135ff., 171, 197, 222, 229, 250, 259, 261-63, 286
Physical force, see Force
Picketing, 229, 231, 243
Plato, 23, 63
Plebeians, 23, 247
Plowman, Max, 41n.
Polak, H. S. L., 38
Police, 33, 153, 155, 161, 204, 232, 235, 273, 276, 290, 307ff.
Prayer, 82, 83, 110, 123-24, 146
Press, 184, 186, 188-90, 296
Prison, see Jail
Processions, 184-86
Progress, 106, 111-12, 139, 292
Progression, the law of, 106, 221, 225, 269
Prohibition, 195, 203-04, 317, 322
Propaganda, 36, 176, 184ff., 223, 229, 235, 250, 268, 274, 339
Property, 33, 83ff., 156, 197, 251-52, 282, 299, 308
Proudhon, 290n.
Public opinion, 117ff., 139, 184, 189, 229-31, 259-60, 264, 269, 338-39
Punishment, 35, 143, 154ff., 223, 230, 232, 257, 259, 305ff.
Punjab, 211, 219, 251, 265
Pyarelal, 181n.

QAUMI SEVA DAL, 178
Quakers, 29, 164
Quran, 21

RADHAKRISHNAN, S., 8n., 59n., 80n., 82n., 84n., 103n., 111n., 288n.
Rajachandra, 33, 34n.
Rajendraprasad, 245n., 273n.
Rajkot, 54, 146, 240, 266
Ramayana, 9
Ramaraj, 294
Rebirth, 53, 109
Red Indian, 29
Religion, 12, 25, 38-40, 61, 64, 88, 94-95, 99-100, 117, 167, 204, 210, 240, 250-51, 268, 301
Renunciation, 11-12, 111ff., 182
Repression, 35-36, 77-78, 80, 109-11, 113, 143, 214-17, 218n., 224, 235, 240, 247-48, 268ff., 339
Revolution, 56, 163, 233, 260, 271, 274ff., 279, 328, 341;—non-violent, 153-54, 207-08, 233, 238, 249, 277ff., 297, 300, 302-03;—violent, 138, 207-08, 238, 274ff.
Rights and duties, 246, 254, 258ff., 294, 307ff.
Rig Veda, 8
Rolland, Romain, 32n., 36, 55n., 80n., 268n.
Ross, E. A., 269n., 289n.
Round Table Conference, 183n., 238, 298
Royden, Maude, 84n.
Ruru-deer Jataka, 17
Ruskin, 31-32, 90n.
Russell, B., 36, 268
Russia, 30, 37, 220, 278
Ruthnaswamy, M., 103n., 266n.

SABARMATI ASHRAM, 56, 168
Sabotage, 224
Sacrifice, 112-13, 159, 183n., 227, 234, 250

Sammiliti Samiti, see Co-ordination Committee
Samoa, Western, 37
Samuel, Viscount, 82
Sanchalaks, 203
Sarvodaya, 53
Sarvodaya Samaj, 178
Satya, see Truth
Satyagraha, 4, 37, 52, 56-57, 76, 91, 102, 126ff., 165ff., 214ff., 280ff., 280-81, 338ff.;—aggressive aspect of, 242ff.;—aim of, 133-34, 218-19;—and coercion, 261ff.;—as the collective technique of direct action, 214ff.;—and compromise, 135ff.;—and constitutional methods, 257ff.;—the constructive aspect of, 190ff.;—and crime, 154ff., 303ff.;—and defence against foreign aggression, 329ff.;—and defensive aspect of, 242ff.;—and discipline, 76ff., 182ff., 211ff.;—and failure, 74-75, 268ff.;—and faith in God, 39ff.;—the future of, 344-45;—individual, 242ff.;—and leadership, 76ff., 117ff., 165ff.;—the meaning of, 126ff.;—and money and numbers, 224ff.;—movements in India, 97, 102-03, 118-19, 219ff., 232ff., 244ff., 271ff.;—and non-embarrassment, 214ff.;—and non-political conflicts, 249ff.;—and oppression, 268ff.;—and parallel government, 233, 238, 241;—and passive resistance, 126ff.;—and propaganda, 184ff.;—and sabotage, 224;—the science of, 6, 40, 59-60, 341ff.;—and scorched-earth policy, 330-31;—and suffering, 111ff., 139ff.;—suspension of, 214ff.;—the technique of, 135ff., 214ff.;—and trusteeship, 85ff.;—the universal applicability of, 128-29, 161-63, 164, 266ff.;—and violent resistance, 274ff.;—as the way of life, 126ff.; see also Boycott, Civil Disobedience, Constructive programme, *Dhurna*, Fasting, *Hijrat*, M. K. Gandhi, Non-co-operation, Non-payment of taxes, Non-violence, Non-violent direct action, Pacifism, Passive Resistance, Picketing, Revolution and Strike
Satyagraha pledge, 182-83, 211ff., 245
Satyagrahi, 40, 58, 75, 76ff., 116ff., 136ff., 182ff., 211ff., 214ff., 250ff., 281, 292, 299, 301, 304ff., 337ff.
Scorched-earth policy, 330
Secrecy, 161, 207, 222ff., 272
Secretary of State for India, 150
Second Chambers, 298
Secular State, 301
Self-sufficiency, 96, 303, 315, 319-20, 327, 340
Sense-perception, 46-47
Separate electorates, 149
Sevagram, 195, 202
Shaw, Bernard, 65
Shridharani, K., 143n.
Shudras, 8
Sibley, M. Q., 33n.
Sikhs, 143, 251
Silence, 110, 123
Simonians, 28
Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, 245n., 246n., 273n.
Smuts, General, 136, 141n., 251n.
Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth, 177
Social techniques, 268, 278
Socinians, 28
Socrates, 23
Sorokin, 227n., 335n.
Soul-force, 40-41, 46, 73-75, 88, 108, 128, 132, 134, 140, 153, 158, 182, 185, 188, 225, 270, 281, 337, 341
South Africa, 30, 34, 127, 131, 136, 165, 219, 223, 225, 241, 249, 259n., 267, 269, 271, 310
Sovereignty, 258-59, 293-94
Speiegel, H. W., 335n.
Spinning, Spinning-wheel, 90-91, 200ff., 246, 306
Spratt, P., 80n., 111n.
State, 3, 29-30, 33, 35-36, 39, 56, 85-

87, 155, 190, 194, 205, 208, 232, 238, 240ff., 251ff., 258ff., 279ff., 288ff., 340-41; see also Non-violent State and Secular State
Steed, W., 3n.
Stoics, 23
Stratton, G. M., 163n.
Strike, 30, 206-07, 219, 254ff., 262ff.
Students, 196, 204, 206-07, 232, 318ff.
Suffering, 16, 61, 67, 75, 111ff., 126, 131, 139ff., 152-54, 159, 161-63, 182, 185, 190-91, 208, 215, 225, 227, 237, 240, 249, 254-55, 259, 262-63, 270-71, 286, 301, 339
Suicide, 152n., 158
Swadeshi, 83, 93ff., 166, 196, 211, 232, 235, 284, 286, 289, 326, 338
Swaraj, 54, 82, 98, 130, 161, 168-69, 191-93, 206, 211, 219-20, 229, 236n., 261, 276, 281, 287, 290, 292-94, 295n., 297-98, 299n., 302, 307, 324, 327
Swarajists, 171
Sweden, 37
Syndicalists, 274

TAGORE, RABINDRANATH, 6, 111, 151
Taoism, 22-23
Taxation, Taxes, 35, 86, 232, 235-36, 258, 316-18
Tear gas, 308
Tennyson, 122
Tilak Swaraj Fund, 226
Thoreau, 28, 30
Tolstoy, Leo, 25, 28, 32-35, 55, 90n., 164
Tours, 186, 204, 250
Travancore, 220, 241, 250
Trusteeship, 85ff., 156, 197, 212, 252, 253-54, 282, 308, 315, 323
Truth, 7, 8, 10, 27, 34, 38, 40, 41-43, 44-46, 48-49, 53ff., 76, 78, 90, 99, 101-02, 109, 114-16, 117, 119-21, 123, 126, 131, 133-34, 135, 138, 148, 151, 162, 165, 168-70, 178, 182, 185-88, 190-91, 220, 222, 225, 325, 337-38, 341-43

UPANISHADS, 11
Untouchability, Untouchables, 97ff., 149-50, 153, 195, 200, 205, 210, 211, 235, 248, 250, 273
Unwin, J. D., 81
Utilitarian, 53-54

VAISHNAVA, 14, 20n., 43, 131
Varnashramadharma, 8-9, 95, 98, 99, 205, 285, 288, 312
Vaudois 28
Vegetarianism, 69
Vijayaraghavachariar, C., 219
Village life, Villages, 87, 177, 179-80, 194ff., 230, 236, 273, 283-86, 288, 298, 303, 306, 309, 313-14, 321, 326
Village industries, 179, 195ff., 284, 312-15; see also Cottage industries and Handicrafts
Violence, 4, 8, 13, 22, 27-31, 33-36, 54-55, 60, 61, 64-65, 67-74, 86-87, 88, 89, 116, 121, 127-30, 131, 134, 138-39, 141-42, 144-45, 147-48, 153-55, 156-57, 160-62, 164-65, 172-74, 181, 192, 193, 197, 216-17, 218, 218n., 221, 222, 228-31, 234-37, 240, 242, 243-45, 254, 261-67, 270-72, 273-77, 280-82, 288, 291, 302-05, 307-09, 316, 327-28, 333-34, 337
Volunteers, 184ff., 211-13, 226, 233, 243, 250
Vote, 170-72, 297-300, 323
Voter, 232, 298, 299
Vows, 56, 60, 84, 131
Vykom, 250

WADALA, 243
Wadia, A. R., 111n.
Walker, Roy, 187n., 244n., 245n.
War, 3, 5, 9, 12-13, 19, 28-29, 35-37, 70, 87, 95, 122, 128, 163, 169, 172-73, 184, 192, 197, 214, 220, 245-47, 254, 260n., 267, 276-78, 292, 327ff.
Warren, Josiah, 290n.
Weldenses, 28
Wells, H. G., 19, 28
Wilenski, R. H., 32n.
Wilkinson, Miss, 273n.

Willoughby, W. W., 325n.
Wright, Quincy, 275n., 334-35n.
Women, 157-59, 195, 205, 231, 273
Working Committee of Congress, 176, 177, 180n., 211, 235-38, 245
Wrong-doer, 134, 143-45, 151, 159-60, 227, 249, 265; see also Evil-doer

YOGIC SYSTEM, 286
Yone Noguchi, 111
Young India, 188

ZAMINDARI SYSTEM, 252-53, 285, 315

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